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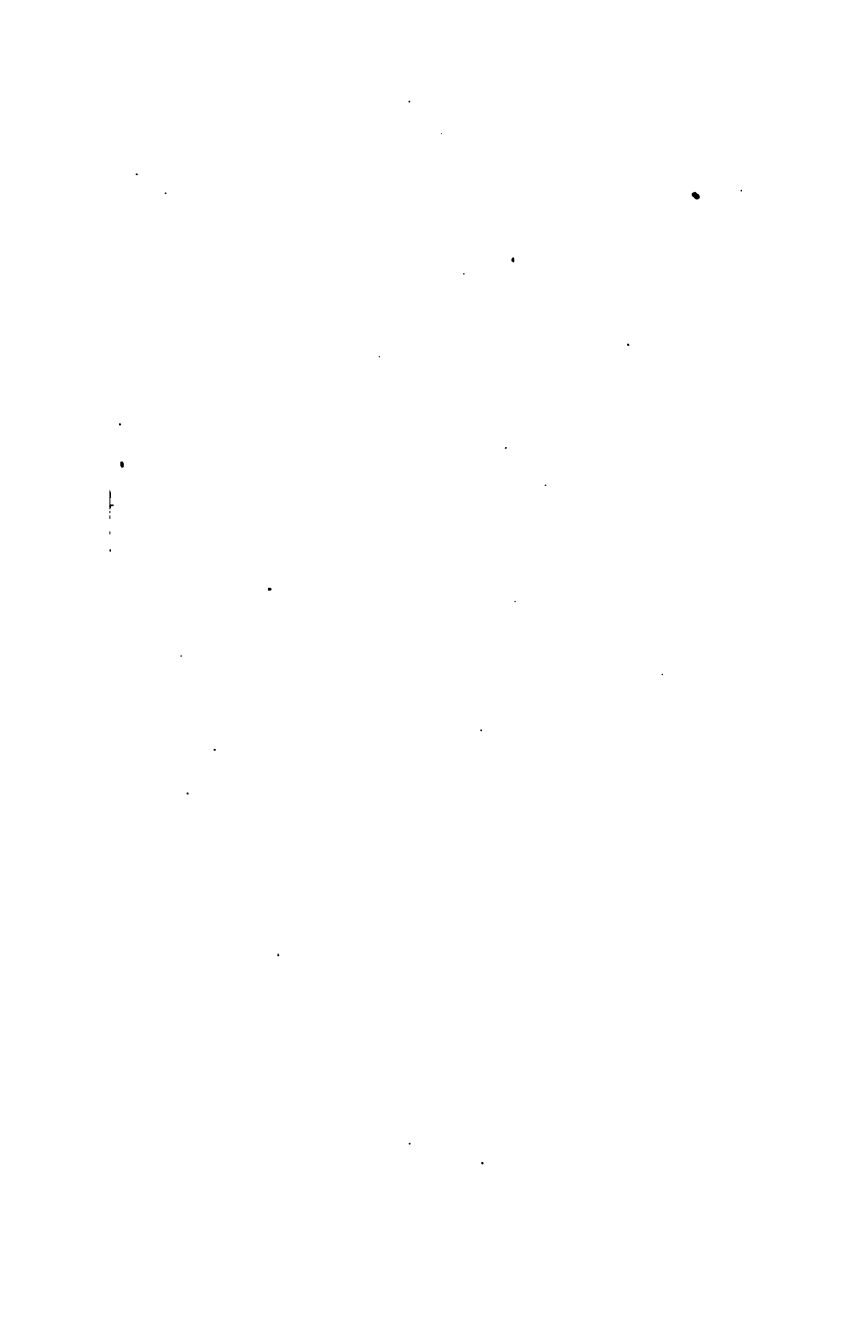
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THE
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OF
John Dryden.

VOL. I.

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THE
LIFE OF JOHN DRYDEN.

BY
DR. JOHNSON.

OF the great poet whose life I am about to delineate, the curiosity which his reputation must excite will require a display more ample than can now be given. His contemporaries, however they revered his genius, left his life unwritten; and nothing therefore can be known beyond what casual mention and uncertain tradition have supplied.

JOHN DRYDEN was born August 9, 1631, at Aldwinkle, near Oundle, the son of Erasmus Dryden, of Titchmersh; who was the third son of Sir Erasmus Dryden, Baronet, of Canons Ashby. All these places are in Northamptonshire; but the original stock of the family was in the county of Huntingdon.

He is reported by his last biographer, Derrick, to have inherited from his father an estate of two hundred a year, and to have been bred, as was said, an Anabaptist. For either of these particulars no authority is given. Such a fortune ought to have secured him from that poverty which seems always to have oppressed him; or, if he had wasted it, to have made him ashamed of publishing his necessities. But though he had many enemies, who undoubtedly examined his life with a scrutiny sufficiently malicious, I do not remember that he is ever charged with waste

of his patrimony. He was indeed sometimes reproached for his first religion. I am therefore inclined to believe that Derrick's intelligence was partly true, and partly erroneous.

From Westminster School, where he was instructed as one of the King's scholars by Dr. Busby, whom he long after continued to reverence, he was in 1650 elected to one of the Westminster scholarships at Cambridge¹.

Of his school performances has appeared only a poem on the death of Lord Hastings, composed with great ambition of such conceits as, notwithstanding the reformation begun by Waller and Denham, the example of Cowley still kept in reputation. Lord Hastings died of the small-pox; and his poet has made of the pustules first rosebuds, and then gems; at last exalts them into stars; and says,

No comet need foretel his change drew on,
Whose corpse might seem a constellation.

At the university he does not appear to have been eager of poetical distinction, or to have lavished his early wit either on fictitious subjects or public occasions. He probably considered, that he, who proposed to be an author, ought first to be a student. He obtained, whatever was the reason, no fellowship in the college. Why he was excluded cannot now be known, and it is vain to guess; had he thought himself injured, he knew how to complain. In the life of Plutarch he mentions his education in the college with gratitude; but, in a prologue at Oxford, he has these lines:

Oxford to him a dearer name shall be
Than his own mother university;
Thebes did his rude, unknowing youth engage:
He chooses Athens in his riper age.

¹ Trinity College, where he was admitted to a Bachelor's Degree in 1653.

It was not till the death of Cromwell, in 1658, that he became a public candidate for fame, by publishing 'Heroic Stanzas on the late Lord Protector;' which, compared with the verses of Sprat and Waller on the same occasion, were sufficient to raise great expectations of the rising poet.

When the King was restored, Dryden, like the other panegyrists of usurpation, changed his opinion, or his profession, and published 'ASTREA REDUX; a poem on the happy Restoration and Return of his most sacred Majesty King Charles the Second.'

The reproach of inconstancy was, on this occasion, shared with such numbers, that it produced neither hatred nor disgrace! if he changed, he changed with the nation. It was, however, not totally forgotten when his reputation raised him enemies.

The same year, he praised the new King in a second poem on his restoration. In the *ASTREA* was the line,

An horrid *stillness* first invades the ear,
And in that silence we a tempest fear—

for which he was persecuted with perpetual ridicule, perhaps with more than was deserved. *Silence* is indeed mere privation; and, so considered, cannot *invade*; but privation likewise certainly is *darkness*, and probably *cold*; yet poetry has never been refused the right of ascribing effects or agency to them as to positive powers. No man scruples to say that *darkness* hinders him from his work; or that *cold* has killed the plants. Death is also privation; yet who has made any difficulty of assigning to Death a dart, and the power of striking?

In settling the order of his works there is some difficulty; for, even when they are important enough to be formally offered to a patron, he does not commonly date his dedication; the time of writing and

publishing is not always the same; nor can the first editions be easily found, if even from them could be obtained the necessary information.

The time at which his first play was exhibited is not certainly known, because it was not printed till it was, some years afterwards, altered and revived; but, since the plays are said to be printed in the order in which they were written, from the dates of some those of others may be inferred; and thus it may be collected, that in 1663, in the thirty-second year of his life, he commenced a writer for the stage; compelled undoubtedly by necessity, for he appears never to have loved that exercise of his genius, or to have much pleased himself with his own dramas.

Of the stage, when he had once invaded it, he kept possession for many years; not indeed without the competition of rivals who sometimes prevailed, or the censure of critics, which was often poignant and often just; but with such a degree of reputation as made him at least secure of being heard, whatever might be the final determination of the public.

His first piece was a comedy called the 'Wild Gallant.' He began with no happy auguries; for his performance was so much disapproved, that he was compelled to recall it, and change it from its imperfect state to the form in which it now appears, and which is yet sufficiently defective to vindicate the critics.

I wish that there were no necessity of following the progress of his theatrical fame, or tracing the meanders of his mind through the whole series of his dramatic performances; it will be fit, however, to enumerate them, and to take especial notice of those that are distinguished by any peculiarity, intrinsic or concomitant; for the composition and fate of eight-and-twenty dramas include too much of a poetical life to be omitted.

In 1664, he published the 'Rival Ladies,' which

he dedicated to the Earl of Orrery, a man of high reputation both as a writer and as a statesman. In this play he made his essay of dramatic rhyme, which he defends, in his dedication, with sufficient certainty of a favourable hearing; for Orrery was himself a writer of rhyming tragedies.

He then joined with Sir Robert Howard in the 'Indian Queen,' a tragedy in rhyme. The parts which either of them wrote are not distinguished.

The 'Indian Emperor' was published in 1667. It is a tragedy in rhyme, intended for a sequel to 'Howard's Indian Queen.' Of this connection notice was given to the audience by printed bills, distributed at the door; an expedient supposed to be ridiculed in the *Rehearsal*, when Bayes tells how many reams he has printed, to instil into the audience some conception of his plot.

In this play is the description of Night, which Rymer has made famous by preferring it to those of all other poets.

The practice of making tragedies in rhyme was introduced soon after the Restoration, as it seems by the Earl of Orrery, in compliance with the opinion of Charles the Second, who had formed his taste by the French theatre; and Dryden, who wrote, and made no difficulty of declaring that he wrote only to please, and who perhaps knew that by his dexterity of versification he was more likely to excel others in rhyme than without it, very readily adopted his master's preference. He therefore made rhyming tragedies, till, by the prevalence of manifest propriety, he seems to have grown ashamed of making them any longer.

To this play is prefixed a very vehement defence of dramatic rhyme, in confutation of the preface to the 'Duke of Lerma,' in which Sir Robert Howard had censured it.

In 1667 he published 'Annus Mirabilis, the Year

of Wonders,' which may be esteemed one of his most elaborate works.

It is addressed to Sir Robert Howard by a letter, which is not properly a dedication; and, writing to a poet, he has interspersed many critical observations, of which some are common, and some perhaps ventured without much consideration. He began, even now, to exercise the domination of conscious genius, by recommending his own performance: 'I am satisfied that as the Prince and General (Rupert and Monk) are incomparably the best subjects I ever had, so what I have written on them is much better than what I have performed on any other. As I have endeavoured to adorn my poem with noble thoughts, so much more to express those thoughts with elocution.'

It is written in quatrains, or heroic stanzas of four lines; a measure which he had learned from the 'Gondibert' of Davenant, and which he then thought the most majestic that the English language affords. Of this stanza he mentions the incumbrances, increased as they were by the exactness which the age required. It was, throughout his life, very much his custom to recommend his works by representation of the difficulties that he had encountered, without appearing to have sufficiently considered, that where there is no difficulty there is no praise.

There seems to be, in the conduct of Sir Robert Howard and Dryden, towards each other, something that is not now easily to be explained. Dryden, in his dedication to the Earl of Orrery, had defended dramatic rhyme; and Howard, in the preface to a collection of plays, had censured his opinion. Dryden vindicated himself in his 'Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry;' Howard, in his preface to the 'Duke of Lerma,' animadverted on the Vindication; and Dryden, in a preface to the 'Indian Emperor,' replied to the animadversions with great asperity, and almost

with contumely. The dedication to this play is dated the year in which the 'Annus Mirabilis' was published. Here appears a strange inconsistency; but Langbaine affords some help, by relating that the answer to Howard was not published in the first edition of the play, but was added when it was afterwards reprinted; and as the 'Duke of Lerma' did not appear till 1668, the same year in which the dialogue was published, there was time enough for enmity to grow up between authors, who, writing both for the theatre, were naturally rivals.

He was now so much distinguished, that in 1668 he succeeded Sir William Davenant as poet-laureate. The salary of the laureate had been raised in favour of Jonson, by Charles the First, from an hundred marks to one hundred pounds a year, and a tierce of wine; a revenue in those days not inadequate to the conveniences of life.

The same year, he published his essay on 'Dramatic Poetry,' an elegant and instructive dialogue, in which we are told, by Prior, that the principal character is meant to represent the Duke of Dorset. This work seems to have given Addison a model for his 'Dialogues upon Medals.'

'Secret Love, or the Maiden Queen' (1668) is a tragi-comedy. In the preface he discusses a curious question, whether a poet can judge well of his own productions? and determines, very justly, that, of the plan and disposition, and all that can be reduced to principles of science, the author may depend upon his own opinion; but that, in those parts, where fancy predominates, self-love may easily deceive. He might have observed, that what is good only because it pleases, cannot be pronounced good till it has been found to please.

'Sir Martin Mar-all' (1668) is a comedy, published without preface or dedication, and at first without the name of the author. Langbaine charges it, like

most of the rest, with plagiarism; and observes, that the song is translated from Voiture, allowing, however, that both the sense and measure are exactly observed.

‘The Tempest’ (1670) is an alteration of Shakspeare’s play, made by Dryden in conjunction with Davenant; ‘whom,’ says he, ‘I found of so quick a fancy, that nothing was proposed to him in which he could not suddenly produce a thought extremely pleasant and surprising; and those first thoughts of his, contrary to the Latin proverb, were not always the least happy; and as his fancy was quick, so likewise were the products of it remote and new. He borrowed not of any other: and his imaginations were such as could not easily enter into any other man.’

The effect produced by the conjunction of these two powerful minds was, that to Shakspeare’s monster, Caliban, is added a sister monster, Sycorax; and a woman, who, in the original play, had never seen a man, is in this brought acquainted with a man that had never seen a woman.

About this time, in 1673, Dryden seems to have had his quiet much disturbed by the success of the ‘*Empress of Morocco*,’ a tragedy written in rhyme by Elkanah Settle; which was so much applauded, as to make him think his supremacy of reputation in some danger. Settle had not only been prosperous on the stage, but in the confidence of success, had published his play, with sculptures and a preface of defiance. Here was one offence added to another; and, for the last blast of inflammation, it was acted at Whitehall by the Court-ladies.

Dryden could not now repress those emotions, which *he* called indignation, and others jealousy; but wrote upon the play and the dedication such criticism as malignant impatience could pour out in haste.

Of Settle he gives this character: "He's an animal of a most deplored understanding, without reading and conversation. His being is in a twilight of sense, and some glimmering of thought, which he can never fashion into wit or English. His style is boisterous and rough-hewn, his rhyme incorrigibly lewd, and his numbers perpetually harsh and ill-sounding. The little talent which he has, is fancy. He sometimes labours with a thought; but, with the pudder he makes to bring it into the world, 'tis commonly still-born; so that, for want of learning and elocution, he will never be able to express any thing either naturally or justly."

This is not very decent; yet this is one of the pages in which criticism prevails over brutal fury. He proceeds: "He has a heavy hand at fools, and a great felicity in writing nonsense for them. Fools they will be in spite of him. His King, his two Empresses, his Villain, and his Sub-villain, nay his Hero, have all a certain natural cast of the father—their folly was born and bred in them, and something of the *Elkanah* will be visible."

This is Dryden's general declamation; I will not withhold from the reader a particular remark. Having gone through the first act, he says, "To conclude this act with the most rumbling piece of nonsense spoken yet:

"To flattering lightning our feign'd smiles conform,
Which, back'd with thunder, do but gild a storm."

"*Conform a smile to lightning, make a smile imitate lightning, and flattering lightning*: lightning sure is a threatening thing. And this lightning must *gild a storm*. Now, if I must conform by smiles to lightning, then my smiles must gild a storm too: to *gild* with *smiles*, is a new invention of gilding. And gild a storm by being *backed with thunder*. Thunder is part of the storm; so one part of the storm must

help to *gild* another part, and help by *backing*; as if a man would gild a thing the better for being backed, or having a load upon his back. So that here is *gilding* by *conforming*, *smiling lightning backing*, and *thundering*. The whole is as if I should say thus: I will make my counterfeit smiles look like a flattering stone-horse, which, being backed with a trooper, does but gild the battle. I am mistaken if nonsense is not here pretty thick sown. Sure the poet writ these two lines aboard some smack in a storm, and, being sea-sick, spewed up a good lump of clotted nonsense at once."

Here is perhaps a sufficient specimen; but as the pamphlet, though Dryden's, has never been thought worthy of republication, and is not easily to be found, it may gratify curiosity to quote it more largely:

———"Whene'er she bleeds,
He no severer a damnation needs,
That dares pronounce the sentence of her death,
Than the infection that attends that breath."

"*That attends that breath.*—The poet is at *breath* again; *breath* can never 'scape him; and here he brings in a *breath* that must be *infectious* with *pronouncing* a sentence; and this sentence is not to be pronounced till the condemned party *bleeds*; that is, she must be executed first, and sentenced after; and the *pronouncing* of this *sentence* will be *infectious*; that is, others will catch the disease of that sentence, and this infecting of others will torment a man's self. The whole is thus: *when she bleeds, thou needst no greater hell or torment to thyself, than infecting of others by pronouncing a sentence upon her.* What hodge-podge does he make here! Never was Dutch grout such clogging, thick, indigestible stuff. But this is but a taste to stay the stomach; we shall have a more plentiful mess presently.

“Now to dish up the poet’s broth, that I promised :

“For when we’re dead, and our freed souls enlarged,
Of nature’s grosser burden we’re discharged,
Then, gentle as a happy lover’s sigh,
Like wandering meteors through the air we’ll fly,
And in our airy walk, as subtle guests,
We’ll steal into our cruel fathers’ breasts,
There read their souls, and track each passion’s sphere,
See how Revenge moves there, Ambition here ;
And in their orbs view the dark characters
Of sieges, ruins, murders, blood, and wars.
We’ll blot out all those hideous draughts, and write
Pure and white forms ; then with a radiant light
Their breasts encircle, till their passions be
Gentle as nature in its infancy ;
Till, soften’d by our charms, their furies cease,
And their revenge resolves into a peace.
Thus by our death their quarrel ends,
Whom living we made foes, dead we’ll make friends.”

“If this be not a very liberal mess I will refer myself to the stomach of any moderate guest. And a rare mess it is, far excelling any Westminster white-broth. It is a kind of giblet-porridge, made of the giblets of a couple of young geese, stodged full of *meteors, orbs, spheres, track, hideous draughts, dark characters, white forms, and radiant lights*, designed not only to please appetite, and indulge luxury, but it is also physical, being an approved medicine to purge choler ; for it is propounded, by Morena, as a receipt to cure their fathers of their choleric humours ; and, were it written in characters as barbarous as the words, might very well pass for a doctor’s bill. To conclude : it is porridge, ’tis a receipt, ’tis a pig with a pudding in the belly, ’tis I know not what : for, certainly, never any one that pretended to write sense had the impudence before to put such stuff as this into the mouths of those that were to speak it before an audience, whom he did not take to be all fools ; and after that to print it too, and ex-

pose it to the examination of the world. But let us see what we can make of this stuff:

For when we're dead, and our freed souls enlarged——

“Here he tells us what it is to be *dead*; it is to have *our freed souls set free*. Now, if to have a soul set free, is to be dead; then to have a *freed soul* set free, is to have a dead man die.

Then, gently as a happy lover's sigh——

“They two like one *sigh*, and that one *sigh* like two wandering meteors,

——Shall fly through the air——

“That is, they shall mount above like falling stars, or else they shall skip like two Jacks with lanthorns, or Will with a whip, and Madge with a candle.”

And in their airy walk steal into their cruel fathers' breasts, like subtle guests. So “that their *fathers' breasts* must be in an *airy walk*, an *airy walk* of a *flier*. *And there they will read their souls, and track the spheres of their passions.* That is, these walking fliers, Jack with a lanthorn, &c. will put on his spectacles, and fall a *reading souls*, and put on his pumps, and fall a *tracking of spheres*: so that he will read and run, walk and fly, at the same time! Oh! Nimble Jack! *Then he will see, how revenge here, how ambition there*——The birds will hop about. *And then view the dark characters of sieges, ruins, murders, blood, and wars, in their orbs: Track the characters to their forms!* Oh! rare sport for Jack! Never was place so full of game as these breasts! You cannot stir, but flush a sphere, start a character, or unkenneled an orb!”

Settle's is said to have been the first play embellished with sculptures; those ornaments seem to have given poor Dryden great disturbance. He tries however to ease his pain by venting his malice in a parody.

"The poet has not only been so imprudent to expose all this stuff, but so arrogant to defend it with an epistle; like a saucy booth-keeper, that, when he had put a cheat upon the people, would wrangle and fight with any that would not like it, or would offer to discover it; for which arrogance our poet receives this correction: and, to jerk him a little the sharper, I will not transpose his verse, but by the help of his own words transnonsense sense, that, by my stuff, people may judge the better what his is:

Great Boy, thy tragedy and sculptures done,
 From press and plates, in fleets do homeward run;
 And, in ridiculous and humble pride,
 Their course in ballad-singers' baskets guide,
 Whose greasy twigs do all new beauties take,
 From the gay shows thy dainty sculptures make.
 Thy lines a mess of rhyming nonsense yield,
 A senseless tale, with flattering fustian fill'd.
 No grain of sense does in one line appear,
 Thy words big bulks of boisterous bombast bear.
 With noise they move, and from players' mouths rebound,
 When their tongues dance to thy words' empty sound,
 By thee inspired the rumbling verses roll,
 As if that rhyme and bombast lent a soul;
 And with that soul they seem taught duty too;
 To huffing words does humble nonsense bow,
 As if it would thy worthless worth enhance,
 To the' lowest rank of fops thy praise advance,
 To whom, by instinct, all thy stuff is dear:
 Their loud claps echo to the theatre.
 From breaths of fools thy commendation spreads,
 Fame sings thy praise with mouths of logger-heads.
 With noise and laughing each thy fustian greets,
 'Tis clapp'd by choirs of empty-headed cits,
 Who have their tribute sent, and homage given,
 As men in whispers send loud noise to Heaven.'

"Thus I have daubed him with his own puddle: and now we are come from aboard his dancing, masking, rebounding, breathing fleet: and, as if we had landed at Gotham, we meet nothing but fools and nonsense."

Such was the criticism to which the genius of Dryden could be reduced, between rage and terror; rage with little provocation, and terror with little danger. To see the highest mind thus levelled with the meanest, may produce some solace to the consciousness of weakness, and some mortification to the pride of wisdom. But let it be remembered, that minds are not levelled in their powers but when they are first levelled in their desires. Dryden and Settle had both placed their happiness in the claps of multitudes.

'An Evening's Love, or the Mock Astrologer,' a comedy (1671) is dedicated to the illustrious Duke of Newcastle, whom he courts by adding to his praises those of his lady, not only as a lover but a partner of his studies. It is displeasing to think how many names, once celebrated, are since forgotten. Of Newcastle's works nothing is now known but his 'Treatise on Horsemanship.'

The Preface seems very elaborately written, and contains many just remarks on the Fathers of the English drama. Shakspeare's plots, he says, are in the hundred novels of 'Cinthio;' those of Beaumont and Fletcher in Spanish Stories; Jonson only made them for himself. His criticisms upon tragedy, comedy, and farce, are judicious and profound. He endeavours to defend the immorality of some of his comedies by the example of former writers; which is only to say, that he was not the first nor perhaps the greatest offender. Against those that accused him of plagiarism he alleges a favourable expression of the king: 'He only desired that they, who accuse me of thefts, would steal him plays like mine;' and then relates how much labour he spends in fitting for the English stage what he borrows from others.

'Tyrannic Love, or the Virgin Martyr' (1672), was another tragedy in rhyme, conspicuous for many

passages of strength and elegance, and many of empty noise and ridiculous turbulence. The rants of Maximin have been always the sport of criticism; and were at length, if his own confession may be trusted, the shame of the writer.

Of this play he has taken care to let the reader know, that it was contrived and written in seven weeks. Want of time was often his excuse, or perhaps shortness of time was his private boast in the form of an apology.

It was written before the 'Conquest of Granada,' but published after it. The design is to recommend piety. "I considered that pleasure was not the only end of Poesy; and that even the instructions of morality were not so wholly the business of a poet, as that the precepts and examples of piety were to be omitted; for to leave that employment altogether to the clergy, were to forget that religion was first taught in verse, which the laziness or dulness of succeeding priesthood turned afterwards into prose." Thus foolishly could Dryden write, rather than not show his malice to the parsons.

The two parts of the 'Conquest of Granada' (1672), are written with a seeming determination to glut the public with dramatic wonders, to exhibit in its highest elevation a theatrical meteor of incredible love and impossible valour, and to leave no room for a wilder flight to the extravagance of posterity. All the rays of romantic heat, whether amorous or warlike, glow in Almanzor by a kind of concentration. He is above all laws; he is exempt from all restraints; he ranges the world at will, and governs wherever he appears. He fights without inquiring the cause, and loves in spite of the obligations of justice, of rejection by his mistress, and of prohibition from the dead. Yet the scenes are, for the most part, delightful; they exhibit a kind of illustrious depravity, and majestic madness, such as, if

it is sometimes despised, is often revered, and in which the ridiculous is mingled with the astonishing.

In the Epilogue to the second part of the 'Conquest of Granada,' Dryden indulges his favourite pleasure of discrediting his predecessors; and this Epilogue he has defended by a long postscript. He had promised a second dialogue, in which he should more fully treat of the virtues and faults of the English poets, who have written in the dramatic, epic, or lyric way. This promise was never formally performed; but, with respect to the dramatic writers, he has given us, in his prefaces, and in this postscript, something equivalent; but his purpose being to exalt himself by the comparison, he shows faults distinctly, and only praises excellence in general terms.

A play thus written, in professed defiance of probability, naturally drew upon itself the vultures of the theatre. One of the critics that attacked it was Martin Clifford, to whom Sprat addressed the *Life of Cowley*, with such veneration of his critical powers as might naturally excite great expectations of instruction from his remarks. But let honest credulity beware of receiving characters from contemporary writers. Clifford's remarks, by the favour of Dr. Percy, were at last obtained; and, that no man may ever want them more, I will extract enough to satisfy all reasonable desire.

In the first Letter his observation is only general: "You do live," says he, "in as much ignorance and darkness as you did in the womb; your writings are like a Jack-of-all-trade's shop; they have a variety, but nothing of value; and if thou art not the dullest plant-animal that ever the earth produced, all that I have conversed with are strangely mistaken in thee."

In the second, he tells him that *Almanzor* is not more copied from *Achilles* than from *Ancient Pistol*.

"But I am," says he, "strangely mistaken if I have not seen this very Almanzor of yours in some disguise about this town, and passing under another name. Pr'ythee tell me true, was not this Huffcap once the 'Indian Emperor?' and at another time did he not call himself Maximin? Was not Lyndaraxa once called Almeria? I mean under Montezuma the Indian Emperor. I protest and vow they are either the same, or so alike, that I cannot, for my heart, distinguish one from the other. You are therefore a strange unconscionable thief; thou art not content to steal from others, but dost rob thy poor wretched self too."

Now was Settle's time to take his revenge. He wrote a vindication of his own lines; and, if he is forced to yield any thing, makes his reprisals upon his enemy. To say that his answer is equal to the censure, is no high commendation. To expose Dryden's method of analyzing his expressions, he tries the same experiment upon the same description of the ships in the 'Indian Emperor,' of which however he does not deny the excellence; but intends to show, that by studied misconstruction every thing may be equally represented as ridiculous. After so much of Dryden's elegant animadversions, justice requires that something of Settle's should be exhibited. The following observations are therefore extracted from a quarto pamphlet of ninety-five pages:

'Fate after him below with pain did move,
And Victory could scarce keep pace above.'

"These two lines, if he can show me any sense or thought in, or any thing but bombast and noise, he shall make me believe every word in his observations on Morocco sense."

In the 'Empress of Morocco' were these lines:

'I'll travel then to some remoter sphere,
Till I find out new worlds, and crown you there.'

On which Dryden made this remark :

‘ I believe our learned author takes a sphere for a country; the sphere of Morocco; as if Morocco were the globe of earth and water; but a globe is no sphere neither, by his leave,’ &c. “ So *sphere* must not be sense, unless it relates to a circular motion about a globe, in which sense the astronomers use it. I would desire him to expound those lines in ‘ Granada:’

‘ I’ll to the turrets of the palace go,
And add new fire to those that fight below.
Thence, Hero-like, with torches by my side,
(Far be the omen though) my Love I’ll guide.
No, like his better fortune I’ll appear,
With open arms, loose veil, and flowing hair,
Just flying forward from my rolling sphere.’

“ I wonder, if he be so strict, how he dares make so bold with *sphere* himself, and be so critical in other men’s writing. Fortune is fancied standing on a globe, not on a *sphere*, as he told us in the first act.

“ Because *Elkanah’s Similes are the most unlike things to what they are compared in the world*, I’ll venture to start a simile in his ‘ Annus Mirabilis:’ he gives this poetical description of the ship called the London :

‘ The goodly London in her gallant trim,
The Phoenix-daughter of the vanquish’d old,
Like a rich bride does on the ocean swim,
And on her shadow rides in floating gold.
Her flag aloft spread ruffling in the wind,
And sanguine streamers seem’d the flood to fire :
The weaver, charm’d with what his loom design’d,
Goes on to sea, and knows not to retire.

With roomy decks her guns of mighty strength
Whose low-laid mouths each mounting billow laves,
Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,
She seems a sea-wasp flying in the waves.’

“What a wonderful pother is here to make all these poetical beautifications of a ship; that is, a *phœnix* in the first stanza, and but a *wasp* in the last; nay, to make his humble comparison of a *wasp* more ridiculous, he does not say it flies upon the waves as nimbly as a wasp, or the like, but it seemed a *wasp*. But our author at the writing of this was not in his altitudes, to compare ships to floating palaces: a comparison to the purpose, was a perfection he did not arrive to till the *Indian Emperor's* days. But perhaps his similitude has more in it than we imagine; this ship had a great many guns in her, and they, put all together, made the sting in the wasp's tail: for this is all the reason I can guess, why it seemed a *wasp*. But, because we will allow him all we can to help out, let it be a *phœnix sea-wasp*, and the rarity of such an animal may do much towards heightening the fancy.

“It had been much more to his purpose, if he had designed to render the senseless play little, to have searched for some such pedantry as this:

‘Two ifs scarce make one possibility.
If justice will take all, and nothing give,
Justice, methinks, is not distributive.
To die or kill you is the’ alternative.
Rather than take your life, I will not live.’

“Observe how prettily our author chops logic in heroic verse. Three such fustian canting words as *distributive*, *alternative*, and *two ifs*, no man but himself would have come within the noise of. But he's a man of general learning, and all comes into his play.

“’Twould have done well too if he could have met with the rant or two, worth the observation; such as,

‘Move swiftly, Sun, and fly a lover's pace,
Leave months and weeks behind thee in thy race.’

“ But surely the Sun, whether he flies a lover’s or not a lover’s pace, leaves weeks and months, nay years too, behind him in his race.

“ Poor Robin, or any other of the Philo-mathematics, would have given him satisfaction in the point.

‘ If I could kill thee now, thy fate ’s so low,
That I must stoop, ere I can give the blow.
But mine is fixed so far above thy crown,
That all thy men,
Piled on thy back, can never pull it down.’

“ Now where that is, Almanzor’s fate is fixed, I cannot guess: but, wherever it is, I believe Almanzor, and I think that all Abdalla’s subjects, piled upon one another, might not pull down his fate so well as without piling: besides, I think Abdalla so wise a man, that, if Almanzor had told him piling his men upon his back might do the feat, he would scarcely bear such a weight, for the pleasure of the exploit; but it is a huff, and let Abdalla do it if he dare.

‘ The people like a headlong torrent go,
And every dam they break or overflow.
But, unopposed, they either lose their force,
Or wind in volumes to their former course:’

“ A very pretty allusion, contrary to all sense or reason. Torrents, I take it, let them wind never so much, can never return to their former course, unless he can suppose that fountains can go upwards, which is impossible; nay more, in the foregoing page he tells us so too; a trick of a very unfaithful memory.

‘ But can no more than fountains upward flow;’

which of a *torrent*, which signifies a rapid stream, is much more impossible. Besides, if he goes to quibble, and say that it is not impossible by art water may be made return, and the same water run twice in one and the same channel; then he quite con-

fates what he says: for it is by being opposed, that it runs into its former course: for all engines that make water so return, do it by compulsion and opposition. Or, if he means a headlong torrent for a tide, which would be ridiculous, yet they do not wind in volumes, but come fore-right back (if their upright lies straight to their former course), and that by opposition of the sea-water, that drives them back again.

“And for fancy, when he lights of any thing like it, ’tis a wonder if it be not borrowed. As here, for example of, I find this fanciful thought in his ‘Ann. Mirab.’

‘Old father Thames raised up his reverend head:
But fear’d the fate of Simoeis would return;
Deep in his ooze he sought his sedgy bed;
And shrunk his waters back into his urn.’

“This is stolen from Cowley’s ‘Davideis,’ p. 9.

‘Swift Jordan started, and strait backward fled,
Hiding amongst thick reeds his aged head.’

‘And when the Spaniards their assault begin,
At once beat those without and those within.’

“This Almanzor speaks of himself; and sure for one man to conquer an army within the city, and another without the city, at once, is something difficult: but this flight is pardonable to some we meet with in ‘Granada:’ Osmin, speaking of Almanzor,

‘Who, like a tempest that outrides the wind,
Made a just battle, ere the bodies join’d.’

“Pray, what does this honourable person mean by a *tempest that outrides the wind*! a tempest that outrides itself. To suppose a tempest without wind, is as bad as supposing a man to walk without feet; for if he supposes the tempest to be something distinct from the wind, yet, as being the effect of wind only, to come before the cause is a little preposterous; so that, if he takes it one way, or if he takes it the

other, those two *ifs* will scarcely make one *possibility*." Enough of Settle.

'Marriage-à-la-mode' is a comedy dedicated to the Earl of Rochester; whom he acknowledges not only as the defender of his poetry, but the promoter of his fortune. Langbaine places this play in 1673. The Earl of Rochester, therefore, was the famous Wilmot, whom yet tradition always represents as an enemy to Dryden, and who is mentioned by him with some disrespect in the preface to Juvenal.

'The Assignation, or Love in a Nunnery,' a comedy (1673), was driven off the stage, *against the opinion*, as the author says, *of the best judges*. It is dedicated, in a very elegant address, to Sir Charles Sedley; in which he finds an opportunity for his usual complaint of hard treatment and unreasonable censure.

'Amboyna' is a tissue of mingled dialogue in verse and prose, and was perhaps written in less time than 'The Virgin Martyr;' though the author thought not fit either ostentatiously or mournfully to tell how little labour it cost him, or at how short a warning he produced it. It was a temporary performance, written in the time of the Dutch war, to inflame the nation against their enemies; to whom he hopes, as he declares in his Epilogue, to make his poetry not less destructive than that by which Tyrtæus of old animated the Spartans. This play was written in the second Dutch war, in 1673.

'Troilus and Cressida' (1679) is a play altered from Shakspeare; but so altered, that, even in Langbaine's opinion, "the last scene in the third act is a master-piece." It is introduced by a discourse on 'the Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy,' to which I suspect that Rymer's book had given occasion.

The 'Spanish Fryar' (1681) is a tragi-comedy, eminent for the happy coincidence and coalition of the two plots. As it was written against the Papists,

it would naturally at that time have friends and enemies; and partly by the popularity which it obtained at first, and partly by the real power both of the serious and risible part, it continued long a favourite of the public.

It was Dryden's opinion, at least for some time, and he maintains it in the dedication of this play, that the drama required an alternation of comic and tragic scenes; and that it is necessary to mitigate by alleviations of merriment the pressure of ponderous events, and the fatigue of toilsome passions. "Whoever," says he, "cannot perform both parts, *is but half a writer for the stage.*"

The 'Duke of Guise,' a tragedy (1683), written in conjunction with Lee, as 'Cedipus' had been before, seems to deserve notice only for the offence which it gave to the remnant of the Covenanters, and in general to the enemies of the court, who attacked him with great violence, and were answered by him; though at last he seems to withdraw from the conflict, by transferring the greater part of the blame or merit to his partner. It happened that a contract had been made between them, by which they were to join in writing a play: and "he happened," says Dryden, "to claim the promise just upon the finishing of a poem, when I would have been glad of a little respite.—*Two-thirds of it belonged to him; and to me only the first scene of the play, the whole fourth act, and the first half, or somewhat more, of the fifth.*"

This was a play written professedly for the party of the Duke of York, whose succession was then opposed. A parallel is intended between the Leaguers of France and the Covenanters of England: and this intention produced the controversy.

'Albion and Albanus,' (1685) is a musical drama or opera, written, like the 'Duke of Guise,' against

the Republicans. With what success it was performed, I have not found.

'The State of Innocence, and Fall of Man' (1675) is termed by him an opera: it is rather a tragedy in heroic rhyme, but of which the personages are such as cannot decently be exhibited on the stage. Some such production was foreseen by Marvel, who writes thus to Milton:

'Or if a work so infinite be spann'd,
Jealous I was lest some less skilful hand
(Such as disquiet always what is well,
And by ill-imitating would excel,)
Might hence presume the whole creation's day
To change in scenes, and show it in a play.'

It is another of his hasty productions; for the heat of his imagination raised it in a month.

This composition is addressed to the Princess of Modena, then Duchess of York, in a strain of flattery which disgraces genius, and which it was wonderful that any man that knew the meaning of his own words could use without self-detestation. It is an attempt to mingle earth and heaven, by praising human excellence in the language of religion.

The preface contains an apology for heroic verse and poetic licence; by which is meant not any liberty taken in contracting or extending words, but the use of bold fictions and ambitious figures.

The reason which he gives for printing what was never acted cannot be overpassed: "I was induced to it in my own defence, many hundred copies of it being dispersed abroad without my knowledge or consent; and, every one gathering new faults, it became at length a libel against me." These copies, as they gathered faults, were apparently manuscript; and he lived in an age very unlike ours, if many hundred copies of fourteen hundred lines were likely to be transcribed. An author has a right to print his

own works, and need not seek an apology in falsehood; but he that could bear to write the dedication, felt no pain in writing the preface.

'Aureng Zebe' (1676) is a tragedy founded on the actions of a great prince then reigning, but over nations not likely to employ their critics upon the transactions of the English stage. If he had known and disliked his own character, our trade was not in those times secure from his resentment. His country is at such a distance, that the manners might be safely falsified, and the incidents feigned; for the remoteness of place is remarked, by Racine, to afford the same conveniences to a poet as length of time.

This play is written in rhyme; and has the appearance of being the most elaborate of all the dramas. The personages are imperial; but the dialogue is often domestic, and therefore susceptible of sentiments accommodated to familiar incidents. The *complaint of life* is celebrated; and there are many other passages that may be read with pleasure.

This play is addressed to the Earl of Mulgrave, afterwards Duke of Buckingham, himself, if not a poet, yet a writer of verses, and a critic. In this address Dryden gave the first hints of his intention to write an epic poem. He mentions his design in terms so obscure, that he seems afraid lest his plan should be purloined, as, he says, happened to him when he told it more plainly in his preface to Juvenal. "The design," says he, "you know is great, the story English, and neither too near the present times, nor too distant from them."

'All for Love, or the World well Lost' (1678) a tragedy founded upon the story of Anthony and Cleopatra, he tells us, "is the only play which he wrote for himself:" the rest were given to the people. It is by universal consent accounted the work in which he has admitted the fewest improprieties of style or

character ; but it has one fault equal to many, though rather moral than critical, that, by admitting the romantic omnipotence of Love, he has recommended, as laudable and worthy of imitation, that conduct which, through all ages, the good have censured as vicious, and the bad despised as foolish.

Of this play the prologue and the epilogue, though written upon the common topics of malicious and ignorant criticism, and without any particular relation to the characters or incidents of the drama, are deservedly celebrated for their elegance and sprightliness.

'*Limberham, or the Kind Keeper*' (1680), is a comedy, which, after the third night, was prohibited as too indecent for the stage. What gave offence, was in the printing, as the author says, altered or omitted. Dryden confesses that its indecency was objected to; but Langbaine, who yet seldom favours him, imputes its expulsion to resentment, because it "so much exposed the keeping part of the town."

'*Oedipus*' (1679) is a tragedy formed by Dryden and Lee, in conjunction, from the works of Sophocles, Seneca, and Corneille. Dryden planned the scenes, and composed the first and third acts.

'*Don Sebastian*' is commonly esteemed either the first or second of his dramatic performances. It is too long to be all acted, and has many characters and many incidents; and though it is not without sallies of frantic dignity, and more noise than meaning, yet, as it makes approaches to the possibilities of real life, and has some sentiments which leave a strong impression, it continued long to attract attention. Amidst the distresses of princes, and the vicissitudes of empire, are inserted several scenes which the writer intended for comic; but which, I suppose, that age did not much commend, and this would not endure. There are, however, passages of excellence universally acknowledged; the dispute

and the reconciliation of Dorax and Sebastian has always been admired.

This play was first acted in 1690, after Dryden had for some years discontinued dramatic poetry.

'Amphytrion' is a comedy derived from Plautus and Moliere. The dedication is dated October, 1690. This play seems to have succeeded at its first appearance; and was, I think, long considered as a very diverting entertainment.

'Cleomenes' (1692) is a tragedy, only remarkable as it occasioned an incident related in the 'Guardian,' and allusively mentioned by Dryden in his preface. As he came out from the representation, he was accosted thus by some airy stripling: 'Had I been left alone with a young beauty, I would not have spent my time like your Spartan.' 'That, Sir,' said Dryden, 'perhaps is true; but give me leave to tell you that you are no hero.'

'King Arthur' (1691) is another opera. It was the last work that Dryden performed for King Charles, who did not live to see it exhibited, and it does not seem to have been ever brought upon the stage¹. In the dedication, to the Marquis of Halifax, there is a very elegant character of Charles, and a pleasing account of his latter life. When this was first brought upon the stage, news that the Duke of Monmouth had landed was told in the theatre; upon which the company departed, and 'Arthur' was exhibited no more².

His last drama was 'Love Triumphant,' a tragic-comedy. In his dedication to the Earl of Salisbury

¹ It was set to music by Purcell, and well received, and is yet a favourite entertainment.

² This story is told of the 'Duke of Guise,' which, according to Downes, was acted on the day the Duke of Monmouth landed in the West, who intimates this as the reason why it was performed only six times, and ill received.

he mentions "the lowness of fortune to which he has voluntarily reduced himself, and of which he has no reason to be ashamed."

This play appeared in 1694. It is said to have been unsuccessful. The catastrophe, proceeding merely from a change of mind, is confessed by the author to be defective. Thus, he began and ended his dramatic labours with ill success.

From such a number of theatrical pieces, it will be supposed, by most readers, that he must have improved his fortune; at least, that such diligence with such abilities must have set penury at defiance. But in Dryden's time the drama was very far from that universal approbation which it has now obtained. The playhouse was abhorred by the puritans, and avoided by those who desired the character of seriousness or decency. A grave lawyer would have debased his dignity, and a young trader would have impaired his credit, by appearing in those mansions of dissolute licentiousness. The profits of the theatre, when so many classes of the people were deducted from the audience, were not great; and the poet had, for a long time, but a single night. The first that had two nights was Southern; and the first that had three was Rowe. There were, however, in those days, arts of improving a poet's profit, which Dryden forbore to practise; and a play therefore seldom produced him more than a hundred pounds, by the accumulated gain of the third night, the dedication, and the copy.

Almost every piece had a dedication, written with such elegance and luxuriance of praise, as neither haughtiness nor avarice could be imagined able to resist. But he seems to have made flattery too cheap, That praise is worth nothing of which the price is known.

To increase the value of his copies, he often accompanied his work with a preface of criticism; a

kind of learning then almost new in the English language, and which 'he, who had considered with great accuracy the principles of writing, was able to distribute copiously as occasions arose. By these dissertations the public judgment must have been much improved; and Swift, who conversed with Dryden, relates that he regretted the success of his own instructions, and found his readers made suddenly too skilful to be easily satisfied.

His prologues had such reputation, that for some time a play was considered as less likely to be well received, if some of his verses did not introduce it. The price of a prologue was two guineas, till, being asked to write one for Southern, he demanded three: 'Not,' said he, 'young man, out of disrespect to you; but the players have had my goods too cheap.'

Though he declares, that in his own opinion his genius was not dramatic, he had great confidence in his own fertility; for he is said to have engaged, by contract, to furnish four plays a year.

It is certain that in one year, 1678³, he published 'All for Love,' 'Assignment,' two parts of the 'Conquest of Granada,' 'Sir Martin Mar-all,' and the 'State of Innocence,' six complete plays; with a celerity of performance, which, though all Langbaine's charges of plagiarism should be allowed, shows such facility of composition, such readiness of language, and such copiousness of sentiment, as, since the time of Lopez de Vega, perhaps no other author has ever possessed.

He did not enjoy his reputation, however great, nor his profits, however small, without molestation. He had critics to endure, and rivals to oppose. The two most distinguished wits of the nobility, the Duke

³ Dr. Johnson was misled by Langbaine. Only one of these plays appeared in 1678; nor were there more than three in any year.

of Buckingham and Earl of Rochester, declared themselves his enemies.

Buckingham characterized him, in 1671, by the name of *Bayes* in the 'Rehearsal,' a farce which he is said to have written with the assistance of Butler, the author of 'Hudibras;' Martin Clifford, of the Charter-house; and Dr. Sprat, the friend of Cowley, then his chaplain. Dryden and his friends laughed at the length of time, and the number of hands, employed upon this performance; in which, though by some artifice of action it yet keeps possession of the stage, it is not possible now to find any thing that might not have been written without so long delay, or a confederacy so numerous.

To adjust the minute events of literary history, is tedious and troublesome; it requires indeed no great force of understanding, but often depends upon inquiries which there is no opportunity of making, or is to be fetched from books and pamphlets not always at hand.

The 'Rehearsal' was played in 1671, and yet is represented as ridiculing passages in the 'Conquest of Granada' and 'Assignment,' which were not published till 1678; in 'Marriage à-la-Mode,' published in 1673: and in 'Tyrannic Love,' in 1677. These contradictions show how rashly satire is applied.

It is said that this farce was originally intended against Davenant, who, in the first draught, was characterized by the name of *Bilboa*. Davenant had been a soldier and an adventurer.

There is one passage in the 'Rehearsal' still remaining, which seems to have related originally to Davenant. *Bayes* hurts his nose, and comes in with

⁴ The 'Conquest of Granada' and the 'Rehearsal' were published in 1672; 'The Assignment,' in 1673; 'Marriage a-la-Mode' in the same year; and 'Tyrannic Love,' in 1670.

brown paper applied to the bruise; how this affected Dryden, does not appear. Davenant's nose had suffered such diminution by mishaps among the women, that a patch upon that part evidently denoted him.

It is said likewise that Sir Robert Howard was once meant. The design was probably to ridicule the reigning poet, whatever he might be.

Much of the personal satire, to which it might owe its first reception, is now lost or obscured. *Bayes* probably imitated the dress, and mimicked the manner, of Dryden: the cant words which are so often in his mouth may be supposed to have been Dryden's habitual phrases, or customary exclamations. *Bayes*, when he is to write, is blooded and purged; this, as *Lamotte* relates himself to have heard, was the real practice of the poet.

There were other strokes in the 'Rehearsal' by which malice was gratified; the debate between Love and Honour, which keeps prince *Volscius* in a single boot, is said to have alluded to the misconduct of the Duke of Ormond, who lost Dublin to the rebels while he was toying with a mistress.

The Earl of Rochester, to suppress the reputation of Dryden, took Settle into his protection, and endeavoured to persuade the public that his approbation had been to that time misplaced. Settle was a while in high reputation; his 'Empress of Morocco,' having first delighted the town, was carried in triumph to Whitehall, and played by the ladies of the court. Now was the poetical meteor at the highest; the next moment began its fall. Rochester withdrew his patronage; seeming resolved, says one of his biographers, "to have a judgment contrary to that of the town;" perhaps being unable to endure any reputation beyond a certain height, even when he had himself contributed to raise it.

Neither critics nor rivals did Dryden much mischief, unless they gained from his own temper the

power of vexing him, which his frequent bursts of resentment give reason to suspect. He is always angry at some past, or afraid of some future censure; but he lessens the smart of his wounds by the balm of his own approbation, and endeavours to repel the shafts of criticism by opposing a shield of adamant confidence.

The perpetual accusation produced against him, was that of plagiarism, against which he never attempted any vigorous defence; for though he was perhaps sometimes injuriously censured, he would, by denying part of the charge, have confessed the rest; and, as his adversaries had the proof in their own hands, he, who knew that wit had little power against facts, wisely left, in that perplexity which it generally produces, a question which it was his interest to suppress, and which, unless provoked by vindication, few were likely to examine.

Though the life of a writer, from about thirty-five to sixty-three, may be supposed to have been sufficiently busied by the composition of eight-and-twenty pieces for the stage, Dryden found room in the same space for many other undertakings.

But, how much soever he wrote, he was at least once suspected of writing more; for, in 1679, a paper of verses, called 'An Essay on Satire,' was shown about in manuscript; by which the Earl of Rochester, the Duchess of Portsmouth, and others, were so much provoked, that, as was supposed (for the actors were never discovered), they procured Dryden, whom they suspected as the author, to be waylaid and beaten. 'This incident is mentioned by the Duke of Buckinghamshire, the true writer, in his Art of Poetry; where he says of Dryden,

' Though praised and beaten for another's rhymes,
His own deserve as great applause sometimes.'

His reputation in time was such, that his name

was thought necessary to the success of every poetical or literary performance, and therefore he was engaged to contribute something, whatever it might be, to many publications. He prefixed the *Life of Polybius* to the translation of Sir Henry Sheers; and those of *Lucian* and *Plutarch*, to versions of their works by different hands. Of the English *Tacitus* he translated the first book; and, if Gordon be credited, translated it from the French. Such a charge can hardly be mentioned without some degree of indignation; but it is not, I suppose, so much to be inferred, that Dryden wanted the literature necessary to the perusal of *Tacitus*, as that, considering himself as hidden in a crowd, he had no awe of the public; and, writing merely for money, was contented to get it by the nearest way.

In 1680, the *Epistles of Ovid* being translated by the poets of the time, among which one was the work of Dryden, and another of Dryden and Lord Mulgrave, it was necessary to introduce them by a preface; and Dryden, who on such occasions was regularly summoned, prefixed a discourse upon translation, which was then struggling for the liberty that it now enjoys. Why it should find any difficulty in breaking the shackles of verbal interpretation, which must for ever debar it from elegance, it would be difficult to conjecture, were not the power of prejudice every day observed. The authority of Jonson, Sandys, and Holiday, had fixed the judgment of the nation; and it was not easily believed that a better way could be found than they had taken, though Fanshaw, Denham, Waller, and Cowley, had tried to give examples of a different practice.

In 1681, Dryden became yet more conspicuous by uniting politics with poetry, in the memorable satire called '*Absalom and Achitophel*,' written against the faction which, by Lord Shaftesbury's incitement, set the Duke of Monmouth at its head,

Of this poem, in which personal satire was applied to the support of public principles, and in which therefore every mind was interested, the reception was eager, and the sale so large, that my father, an old bookseller, told me, he had not known it equalled but by Sacheverell's trial.

The reason of this general perusal, Addison has attempted to derive from the delight which the mind feels in the investigation of secrets ; and thinks that curiosity to decipher the names procured readers to the poem. There is no need to inquire why those verses were read, which, to all the attractions of wit, elegance, and harmony, added the co-operation of all the factious passions, and filled every mind with triumph or resentment.

It could not be supposed that all the provocation given by Dryden would be endured without resistance or reply. Both his person and his party were exposed in their turns to the shafts of satire, which, though neither so well pointed, nor perhaps so well aimed, undoubtedly drew blood.

One of these poems is called ' Dryden's Satire on his Muse : ' ascribed, though, as Pope says, falsely, to Somers, who was afterwards Chancellor. The poem, whosoever it was, has much virulence, and some sprightliness. The writer tells all the ill that he can collect both of Dryden and his friends.

The poem of ' Absalom and Achitophel ' had two answers, now both forgotten ; one called ' Azaria and Hushai ; ' the other ' Absalom senior. ' Of these hostile compositions, Dryden apparently imputes ' Absalom senior ' to Settle, by quoting in his verses against him the second line. ' Azaria and Hushai ' was, as Wood says, imputed to him, though it is somewhat unlikely that he should write twice on the same occasion. This is a difficulty which I cannot remove, for want of a minuter knowledge of poetical transactions.

The same year he published 'The Medal,' of which the subject is a medal struck on Lord Shaftesbury's escape from a prosecution, by the *ignoramus* of a grand jury of Londoners.

In both poems he maintains the same principles, and saw them both attacked by the same antagonist. Elkanah Settle, who had answered *Absalom*, appeared with equal courage in opposition to *The Medal*, and published an answer called 'The Medal reversed,' with so much success in both encounters, that he left the palm doubtful, and divided the suffrages of the nation. Such are the revolutions of fame, or such is the prevalence of fashion, that the man whose works have not yet been thought to deserve the care of collecting them, who died forgotten in an hospital, and whose latter years were spent in contriving shows for fairs, and carrying an elegy or epithalamium, of which the beginning and end were occasionally varied, but the intermediate parts were always the same, to every house where there was a funeral or a wedding, might with truth have had inscribed upon his stone,

Here lies the Rival and Antagonist of Dryden !

Settle was, for his rebellion, severely chastised by Dryden under the name of *Doeg*, in the second part of 'Absalom and Achitophel;' and was perhaps for his factious audacity made the city poet, whose annual office was to describe the glories of the Mayor's day. Of these bards he was the last, and seems not much to have deserved even this degree of regard, if it was paid to his political opinions: for he afterwards wrote a panegyric on the *virtues* of judge Jefferies; and what more could have been done by the meanest zealot for prerogative?

Of translated fragments, or occasional poems, to enumerate the titles, or settle the dates, would be tedious, with little use. It may be observed, that,

as Dryden's genius was commonly excited by some personal regard, he rarely writes upon a general topic.

Soon after the accession of King James, when the design of reconciling the nation to the Church of Rome became apparent, and the religion of the court gave the only efficacious title to its favours, Dryden declared himself a convert to Popery. This at any other time might have passed with little censure. Sir Kenelm Digby embraced Popery; the two Reynolds's reciprocally converted one another⁵; and Chillingworth himself was a while so entangled in the wilds of controversy, as to retire for quiet to an Infallible Church. If men of argument and study can find such difficulties, or such motives, as may either unite them to the Church of Rome, or detain them in uncertainty, there can be no wonder that a man, who perhaps never inquired why he was a Protestant, should by an artful and experienced disputant be made a Papist, overborne by the sudden violence of new and unexpected arguments, or deceived by a representation which shows only the doubts on one part, and only the evidence on the other.

That conversion will always be suspected that apparently concurs with interest. He that never finds his error till it hinders his progress towards wealth or honour, will not be thought to love truth only for herself. Yet it may easily happen that information may come at a commodious time; and, as truth and interest are not by any fatal necessity at variance, that one may by accident introduce the other. When opinions are struggling into popularity, the arguments by which they are opposed or defended be-

⁵ Dr. John Reynolds, who lived in the reign of James I. was originally a zealous Papist, and his brother William as earnest a Protestant: but, by mutual disputation, each converted the other.

come more known; and he that changes his profession would perhaps have changed it before, with the like opportunities of instruction. This was the then state of Popery; every artifice was used to show it in its fairest form; and it must be owned to be a religion of external appearance sufficiently attractive.

It is natural to hope that a comprehensive is likewise an elevated soul, and that whoever is wise is also honest. I am willing to believe that Dryden, having employed his mind, active as it was, upon different studies, and filled it, capacious as it was, with other materials, came unprovided to the controversy; and wanted rather skill to discover the right, than virtue to maintain it. But inquiries into the heart are not for man; we must now leave him to his JUDGE.

The priests, having strengthened their cause by so powerful an adherent, were not long before they brought him into action. They engaged him to defend the controversial papers found in the strong box of Charles the Second; and, what was yet harder, to defend them against Stillingfleet.

With hopes of promoting Popery, he was employed to translate Maimbourg's History of the League; which he published with a large introduction. His name is likewise prefixed to the English Life of Francis Xavier; but I know not that he ever owned himself the translator. Perhaps the use of his name was a pious fraud, which however seems not to have had much effect; for neither of the books, I believe, was ever popular.

The version of Xavier's Life is commended by Brown, in a pamphlet not written to flatter; and the occasion of it is said to have been, that the Queen, when she solicited a son, made vows to him as her tutelary saint.

He was supposed to have undertaken to translate

Varillas's History of Heresies; and, when Burnet published remarks upon it, to have written an *Answer*; upon which Burnet makes the following observation:

"I have been informed from England, that a gentleman, who is famous both for poetry and several other things, had spent three months in translating M. Varillas's History; but that, as soon as my Reflections appeared, he discontinued his labour, finding the credit of his author was gone. Now, if he thinks it is recovered by his Answer, he will perhaps go on with his translation; and this may be, for aught I know, as good an entertainment for him as the conversation that he had set on between the Hinds and Panthers, and all the rest of animals, for whom M. Varillas may serve well enough as an author: and this history and that poem are such extraordinary things of their kind, that it will be but suitable to see the author of the worst poem become likewise the translator of the worst history that the age has produced. If his grace and his wit improve both proportionably, he will hardly find that he has gained much by the change he has made, from having no religion, to choose one of the worst. It is true, he had somewhat to sink from in matter of wit; but, as for his morals, it is scarcely possible for him to grow a worse man than he was. He has lately wreaked his malice on me for spoiling his three months' labour; but in it he has done me all the honour that any man can receive from him, which is to be railed at by him. If I had ill-nature enough to prompt me to wish a very bad wish for him, it should be, that he would go on and finish his translation. By that it will appear, whether the English nation, which is the most competent judge in this matter, has, upon the seeing our debate, pronounced in M. Varillas's favour, or in mine. It is true, Mr. D. will suffer a little by it; but at least it will serve to keep him in

from other extravagances; and if he gains little honour by this work, yet he cannot lose so much by it as he has done by his last employment."

Having probably felt his own inferiority in theological controversy, he was desirous of trying whether, by bringing poetry to aid his arguments, he might become a more efficacious defender of his new profession. To reason in verse was, indeed, one of his powers; but subtilty and harmony, united, are still feeble, when opposed to truth.

Actuated therefore by zeal for Rome, or hope of fame, he published the '*Hind and Panther*,' a poem in which the Church of Rome, figured by the *milk-white Hind*, defends her tenets against the Church of England, represented by the *Panther*, a beast beautiful, but spotted.

A fable, which exhibits two beasts talking Theology, appears at once full of absurdity; and it was accordingly ridiculed in the '*City Mouse and Country Mouse*,' a parody, written by Montague, afterwards Earl of Halifax, and Prior, who then gave the first specimen of his abilities.

The conversion of such a man, at such a time, was not likely to pass uncensured. Three dialogues were published by the facetious Thomas Brown, of which the two first were called '*Reasons of Mr. Bayes's changing his Religion*:' and the third, '*The Reasons of Mr. Hains the Player's Conversion and Re-conversion*.' The first was printed in 1688, the second not till 1690, the third in 1691. The clamour seems to have been long continued, and the subject to have strongly fixed the public attention.

In the two first dialogues Bayes is brought into the company of Crites and Eugenius, with whom he had formerly debated on dramatic poetry. The two talkers in the third are Mr. Bayes and Mr. Hains.

Brown was a man not deficient in literature, nor destitute of fancy; but he seems to have thought it

the pinnacle of excellence to be a *merry fellow*; and therefore laid out his powers upon small jests or gross buffoonery; so that his performances have little intrinsic value, and were read only while they were recommended by the novelty of the event that occasioned them.

These dialogues are like his other works: what sense or knowledge they contain is disgraced by the garb in which it is exhibited. One great source of pleasure is to call Dryden *little Bayes*. Ajax, who happens to be mentioned, is "he that wore as many cow-bides upon his shield as would have furnished half the King's army with shoe-leather."

Being asked whether he had seen the 'Hind and Panther,' Crites answers: "Seen it! Mr. Bayes, why I can stir no where but it pursues me; it haunts me worse than a pewter-buttoned serjeant does a decayed cit. Sometimes I meet it in a band-box, when my laundress brings home my linen; sometimes, whether I will or no, it lights my pipe at a coffee-house; sometimes it surprises me in a trunkmaker's shop; and sometimes it refreshes my memory for me on the backside of a Chancery-lane parcel. For your comfort too, Mr. Bayes, I have not only seen it, as you may perceive, but have read it too, and can quote it as freely upon occasion as a frugal tradesman can quote that noble treatise the 'Worth of a Penny' to his extravagant 'prentice, that revels in stewed apples and penny custards."

The whole animation of these compositions arises from a profusion of ludicrous and affected comparisons. "To secure one's chastity," says Bayes, "little more is necessary than to leave off a correspondence with the other sex, which, to a wise man, is no greater a punishment than it would be to a fanatic person to be forbid seeing 'The Cheats' and 'The Committee;' or for my Lord Mayor and Aldermen to be interdicted the sight of 'The London

Cuckolds.” This is the general strain, and therefore I shall be easily excused the labour of more transcription.

Brown does not wholly forget past transactions: “You began,” says Crites to Bayes, “a very different religion, and have not mended the matter in your last choice. It was but reason that your Muse, which appeared first in a tyrant’s quarrel, should employ her last efforts to justify the usurpation of the *Hind*.”

Next year the nation was summoned to celebrate the birth of the Prince. Now was the time for Dryden to rouse his imagination, and strain his voice. Happy days were at hand, and he was willing to enjoy and diffuse the anticipated blessings. He published a poem, filled with predictions of greatness and prosperity; predictions, of which it is not necessary to tell how they have been verified.

A few months passed after these joyful notes, and every blossom of Popish hope was blasted for ever by the Revolution. A Papist now could be no longer Laureate. The revenue, which he had enjoyed with so much pride and praise, was transferred to Shadwell, an old enemy, whom he had formerly stigmatized by the name of *Og*. Dryden could not decently complain that he was deposed; but seemed very angry that Shadwell succeeded him, and has therefore celebrated the intruder’s inauguration in a poem exquisitely satirical, called ‘*Mac Flecknoe*,’ of which the ‘*Dunciad*,’ as Pope himself declares, is an imitation, though more extended in its plan, and more diversified in its incidents.

It is related by Prior, that Lord Dorset, when as chamberlain he was constrained to eject Dryden from his office, gave him from his own purse an allowance equal to the salary. This is no romantic or incredible act of generosity; an hundred a year is often enough given to claims less cogent by men less

famed for liberality. Yet Dryden always represented himself as suffering under a public infliction; and once particularly demands respect for the patience with which he endured the loss of his little fortune. His patron might, indeed, enjoin him to suppress his bounty; but, if he suffered nothing, he should not have complained.

During the short reign of King James, he had written nothing for the stage⁶, being, in his opinion, more profitably employed in controversy and flattery. Of praise he might perhaps have been less lavish without inconvenience, for James was never said to have much regard for poetry: he was to be flattered only by adopting his religion.

Times were now changed: Dryden was no longer the court-poet, and was to look back for support to his former trade; and having waited about two years, either considering himself as discountenanced by the public, or perhaps expecting a second Revolution, he produced 'Don Sebastian' in 1690; and in the next four years four dramas more.

In 1693 appeared a new version of Juvenal and Persius. Of Juvenal he translated the first, third, sixth, tenth, and sixteenth satires; and of Persius the whole work. On this occasion he introduced his two sons to the public, as nurselings of the Muses. The fourteenth of Juvenal was the work of John, and the seventh of Charles Dryden. He prefixed a very ample preface, in the form of a dedication to Lord Dorset; and there gives an account of the design which he had once formed to write an epic poem on the actions either of Arthur or the Black Prince. He considered the epic as necessarily including some kind of supernatural agency, and had imagined a new kind of contest between the guardian angels of kingdoms, of whom he con-

⁶ 'Albion and Albanus' excepted.

ceived that each might be represented zealous for his charge, without any intended opposition to the purposes of the Supreme Being, of which all created minds must in part be ignorant.

This is the most reasonable scheme of celestial interposition that ever was formed. The surprises and terrors of enchantments, which have succeeded to the intrigues and oppositions of Pagan deities, afford very striking scenes, and open a vast extent to the imagination; but, as Boileau observes (and Boileau will be seldom found mistaken), with this incurable defect, that, in a contest between Heaven and Hell, we know at the beginning which is to prevail; for this reason we follow Rinaldo to the enchanted wood with more curiosity than terror.

In the scheme of Dryden there is one great difficulty, which yet he would perhaps have had address enough to surmount. In a war justice can be but on one side; and, to entitle the hero to the protection of angels, he must fight in defence of indubitable right. Yet some of the celestial beings, thus opposed to each other, must have been represented as defending guilt.

That this poem was never written, is reasonably to be lamented. It would doubtless have improved our numbers, and enlarged our language; and might perhaps have contributed by pleasing instructions to rectify our opinions, and purify our manners.

What he required as the indispensable condition of such an undertaking, a public stipend, was not likely in these times to be obtained. Riches were not become familiar to us; nor had the nation yet learned to be liberal.

This plan he charged Blackmore with stealing; "only," says he, "the guardian angels of kingdoms were machines too ponderous for him to manage."

In 1694, he began the most laborious and difficult of all his works, the translation of Virgil; from which

he borrowed two months, that he might turn 'Fresnoy's Art of Painting' into English prose. The Preface, which he boasts to have written in twelve mornings, exhibits a parallel of poetry and painting, with a miscellaneous collection of critical remarks, such as cost a mind stored like his no labour to produce them.

In 1697, he published his version of the works of Virgil; and, that no opportunity of profit might be lost, dedicated the Pastorals to the Lord Clifford, the Georgics to the Earl of Chesterfield, and the *Æneid* to the Earl of Mulgrave. This economy of flattery, at once lavish and discreet, did not pass without observation.

This translation was censured by Milbourne, a clergyman, styled, by Pope, "the fairest of critics," because he exhibited his own version to be compared with that which he condemned.

His last work was his 'Fables,' published in consequence as is supposed, of a contract now in the hands of Mr. Tonson: by which he obliged himself, in consideration of three hundred pounds, to finish for the press ten thousand verses.

In this volume is comprised the well-known Ode on St. Cecilia's Day, which, as appeared by a letter communicated to Dr. Birch, he spent a fortnight in composing and correcting. But what is this to the patience and diligence of Boileau, whose 'Equivoque,' a poem of only three hundred and forty-six lines, took from his life eleven months to write it, and three years to revise it?

Part of his book of Fables is the first *Iliad* in English, intended as a specimen of a version of the whole. Considering into what hands Homer was to fall, the reader cannot but rejoice that this project went no farther.

The time was now at hand which was to put an end to all his schemes and labours. On the 1st of

- May, 1701, having been some time, as he tells us, a cripple in his limbs, he died, in Gerard Street, of a mortification in his leg.

There is extant a wild story relating to some vexatious events that happened at his funeral, which, at the end of Congreve's *Life*, by a writer of I know not what credit, are thus related, as I find the account transferred to a biographical dictionary.

"Mr. Dryden dying on the Wednesday morning, Dr. Thomas Sprat, then Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Westminster, sent the next day to the Lady Elizabeth Howard, Mr. Dryden's widow, that he would make a present of the ground, which was forty pounds, with all the other Abbey-fees. The Lord Halifax likewise sent to the Lady Elizabeth, and Mr. Charles Dryden her son, that, if they would give him leave to bury Mr. Dryden, he would inter him with a gentleman's private funeral, and afterwards bestow five hundred pounds on a monument in the Abbey; which, as they had no reason to refuse, they accepted. On the Saturday following the company came; the corpse was put into a velvet hearse; and eighteen mourning coaches, filled with company, attended. When they were just ready to move, the Lord Jefferies, son of the Lord Chancellor Jefferies, with some of his rakish companions, coming by, asked whose funeral it was: and being told Mr. Dryden's, he said, 'What, shall Dryden, the greatest honour and ornament of the nation, be buried after this private manner! No, gentlemen, let all that loved Mr. Dryden, and honour his memory, alight and join with me in gaining my lady's consent to let me have the honour of his interment, which shall be after another manner than this; and I will bestow a thousand pounds on a monument in the Abbey for him.' The gentlemen in the coaches, not knowing of the Bishop of Rochester's favour, nor of the Lord Halifax's generous design (they both having,

out of respect to the family, enjoined the Lady Elizabeth, and her son, to keep their favour concealed to the world, and let it pass for their own expense,) readily came out of their coaches, and attended Lord Jefferies up to the Lady's bedside, who was then sick. He repeated the purport of what he had before said; but she absolutely refusing, he fell on his knees, vowing never to rise till his request was granted. The rest of the company by his desire kneeled also; and the lady, being under a sudden surprize, fainted away. As soon as she recovered her speech, she cried, 'No, no.'—'Enough, gentlemen,' replied he; 'my lady is very good, she says, Go, go.' She repeated her former words with all her strength, but in vain, for her feeble voice was lost in their acclamations of joy; and the Lord Jefferies ordered the hearsemen to carry the corpse to Mr. Russel's, an undertaker in Cheapside, and leave it there till he should send orders for the embalmment, which, he added, should be after the royal manner. His directions were obeyed, the company dispersed, and Lady Elizabeth and her son remained inconsolable. The next day Mr. Charles Dryden waited on the Lord Halifax and the Bishop, to excuse his mother and himself, by relating the real truth. But neither his Lordship nor the Bishop would admit of any plea; especially the latter, who had the Abbey lighted, the ground opened, the choir attending, an anthem ready set, and himself waiting for some time without any corpse to bury. The undertaker, after three days' expectance of orders for embalmment without receiving any, waited on the Lord Jefferies; who, pretending ignorance of the matter, turned it off with an ill-natured jest, saying, 'that those who observed the orders of a drunken frolic deserved no better; that he remembered nothing at all of it; and that he might do what he pleased with the corpse.' Upon this, the under-

- taker waited upon the Lady Elizabeth and her son, and threatened to bring the corpse home, and set it before the door. They desired a day's respite, which was granted. Mr. Charles Dryden wrote a handsome letter to the Lord Jefferies, who returned it with this cool answer: 'That he knew nothing of the matter, and would be troubled no more about it.' He then addressed the Lord Halifax and the Bishop of Rochester, who absolutely refused to do any thing in it. In this distress Dr. Garth sent for the corpse to the College of Physicians, and proposed a funeral by subscription, to which himself set a most noble example. At last a day, about three weeks after Mr. Dryden's decease, was appointed for the interment. Dr. Garth pronounced a fine Latin oration, at the College, over the corpse; which was attended to the Abbey by a numerous train of coaches. When the funeral was over, Mr. Charles Dryden sent a challenge to the Lord Jefferies, who refusing to answer it, he sent several others, and went often himself; but could neither get a letter delivered, nor admittance to speak to him; which so incensed him, that he resolved, since his Lordship refused to answer him like a gentleman, that he would watch an opportunity to meet and fight off-hand, though with all the rules of honour; which his Lordship hearing, left the town: and Mr. Charles Dryden could never have the satisfaction of meeting him, though he sought it till his death with the utmost application."

This story I once intended to omit, as it appears with no great evidence; nor have I met with any confirmation, but in a letter of Farquhar; and he only relates that the funeral of Dryden was tumultuary and confused⁷.

⁷ Edward Ward, in his 'London Spy,' 1706, relates, that on the occasion there was a performance of solemn music at the College, and that at the procession, which himself saw, standing at the end of Chancery-Lane, Fleet-Street, there was

Supposing the story true, we may remark, that the gradual change of manners, though imperceptible in the process, appears great when different times, and those not very distant, are compared. If at this time a young drunken Lord should interrupt the pompous regularity of a magnificent funeral, what would be the event, but that he would be jostled out of the way, and compelled to be quiet? If he should thrust himself into a house, he would be sent roughly away; and, what is yet more to the honour of the present time, I believe that those, who had subscribed to the funeral of a man like Dryden, would not, for such an accident, have withdrawn their contributions⁸.

He was buried among the poets in Westminster Abbey, where, though the Duke of Newcastle had, in a general dedication prefixed by Congreve to his dramatic works, accepted thanks for his intention of erecting him a monument, he lay long without distinction, till the Duke of Buckinghamshire gave him a tablet, inscribed only with the name of DRYDEN.

He married the Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the Earl of Berkshire, with circumstances, according to the satire imputed to Lord Somers, not very honourable to either party; by her he had three sons, Charles, John, and Henry. Charles was usher of the palace to Pope Clement the XIth; and,

a concert of hautboys and trumpets; and that the day of Dryden's interment was Monday, the 13th of May, which, according to Johnson, was twelve days after his decease, and shows how long his funeral was in suspense. Ward, who knew not that the expense of it was defrayed by subscription, compliments Lord Jefferies for so pious an undertaking.

⁸ Register of the College of Physicians: "May 3, 1700. Comitiiis Censoriis ordinariis. At the request of several persons of Quality, that Mr. Dryden might be carried from the College of Physicians to be interred at Westminster, it was unanimously granted by the President and Censors."

visiting England in 1704, was drowned in an attempt to swim across the Thames at Windsor.

John was author of a comedy called 'The Husband his own Cuckold.' He is said to have died at Rome. Henry entered into some religious order. It is some proof of Dryden's sincerity in his second religion, that he taught it to his sons. A man, conscious of hypocritical profession in himself, is not likely to convert others; and, as his sons were qualified in 1693 to appear among the translators of Juvenal, they must have been taught some religion before their father's change.

Of the person of Dryden I know not any account; of his mind, the portrait which has been left by Congreve, who knew him with great familiarity, is such as adds our love of his manners to our admiration of his genius. "He was," we are told, "of a nature exceedingly humane and compassionate, ready to forgive injuries, and capable of a sincere reconciliation with those who had offended him. His friendship, where he professed it, went beyond his professions. He was of a very easy, of very pleasing access; but somewhat slow, and, as it were diffident, in his advances to others: he had that in his nature which abhorred intrusion into any society whatever. He was therefore less known, and consequently his character became more liable to misapprehensions and misrepresentations: he was very modest, and very easily to be discountenanced in his approaches to his equals or superiors. As his reading had been very extensive, so was he very happy in a memory tenacious of every thing that he had read. He was not more possessed of knowledge than he was communicative of it; but then his communication was by no means pedantic, or imposed upon the conversation, but just such, and went so far, as, by the natural turn of the conversation in which he was engaged, it was necessarily promoted or required. He

was extremely ready and gentle in his correction of the errors of any writer who thought fit to consult him, and full as ready and patient to admit the reprehension of others, in respect of his own oversights or mistakes."

To this account of Congreve nothing can be objected but the fondness of friendship; and to have excited that fondness in such a mind is no small degree of praise. The disposition of Dryden, however, is shown in this character rather as it exhibited itself in cursory conversation, than as it operated on the more important parts of life. His placability and his friendship indeed were solid virtues; but courtesy and good-humour are often found with little real worth. Since Congreve, who knew him well, has told us no more, the rest must be collected as it can from other testimonies, and particularly from those notices which Dryden has very liberally given us of himself.

The modesty which made him so slow to advance, and so easy to be repulsed, was certainly no suspicion of deficient merit, or unconsciousness of his own value: he appears to have known, in its whole extent, the dignity of his own character, and to have set a very high value on his own powers and performances. He probably did not offer his conversation, because he expected it to be solicited; and he retired from a cold reception, not submissive but indignant, with such deference of his own greatness as made him unwilling to expose it to neglect or violation.

His modesty was by no means inconsistent with ostentatiousness; he is diligent enough to remind the world of his merit, and expresses with very little scruple his high opinion of his own powers; but his self-commendations are read without scorn or indignation; we allow his claims, and love his frankness.

Tradition, however, has not allowed that his con-

fidence in himself exempted him from jealousy of others. He is accused of envy and insidiousness; and is particularly charged with inciting Creech to translate Horace, that he might lose the reputation which Lucretius had given him.

Of this charge we immediately discover that it is merely conjectural; the purpose was such as no man would confess; and a crime that admits no proof, why should we believe?

He has been described as magisterially presiding over the younger writers, and assuming the distribution of poetical fame; but he who excels has a right to teach, and he whose judgment is incontestable may without usurpation examine and decide.

Congreve represents him as ready to advise and instruct; but there is reason to believe that his communication was rather useful than entertaining. He declares of himself that he was saturnine, and not one of those whose sprightly sayings diverted company; and one of his censurers make him say,

‘ Nor wine nor love could ever see me gay;
To writing bred, I knew not what to say.’

There are men whose powers operate only at leisure and in retirement, and whose intellectual vigour deserts them in conversation; whose merriment confuses, and objection disconcerts; whose bashfulness restrains their exertion, and suffers them not to speak till the time of speaking is past; or whose attention to their own character makes them unwilling to utter at hazard what has not been considered, and cannot be recalled.

Of Dryden’s sluggishness in conversation it is vain to search or to guess the cause. He certainly wanted neither sentiments nor language; his intellectual treasures were great, though they were locked up from his own use. “ His thoughts, when he wrote, flowed in upon him so fast that his only care

was which to choose, and which to reject." Such rapidity of composition naturally promises a flow of talk: yet we must be content to believe what an enemy says of him, when he likewise says it of himself. But, whatever was his character as a companion, it appears that he lived in familiarity with the highest persons of his time. It is related by Carte of the Duke of Ormond, that he used often to pass a night with Dryden, and those with whom Dryden consorted: who they were, Carte has not told, but certainly the convivial table at which Ormond sat was not surrounded with a plebeian society. He was indeed reproached with boasting of his familiarity with the great: and Horace will support him in the opinion, that to please superiors is not the lowest kind of merit.

The merit of pleasing must, however, be estimated by the means. Favour is not always gained by good actions or laudable qualities. Caresses and preferences are often bestowed on the auxiliaries of vice, the procurers of pleasure, or the flatterers of vanity. Dryden has never been charged with any personal agency unworthy of a good character: he abetted vice and vanity only with his pen. One of his enemies has accused him of lewdness in his conversation; but, if accusation without proof be credited, who shall be innocent?

His works afford too many examples of dissolute licentiousness, and abject adulation; but they were probably, like his merriment, artificial and constrained; the effects of study and meditation, and his trade rather than his pleasure.

Of the mind that can trade in corruption, and can deliberately pollute itself with ideal wickedness for the sake of spreading the contagion in society, I wish not to conceal or excuse the depravity.—Such degradation of the dignity of genius, such abuse of superlative abilities, cannot be contemplated but

with grief and indignation. What consolation can be had, Dryden has afforded, by living to repent, and to testify his repentance.

Of dramatic immorality he did not want examples among his predecessors, or companions among his contemporaries; but, in the meanness and servility of hyperbolical adulation, I know not whether, since the days in which the Roman emperors were deified, he has been ever equalled, except by Afra Behn in an address to Eleanor Gwyn. When once he has undertaken the task of praise, he no longer retains shame in himself, nor supposes it in his patron. As many odoriferous bodies are observed to diffuse perfumes from year to year, without sensible diminution of bulk or weight, he appears never to have impoverished his mint of flattery by his expenses, however lavish. He had all the forms of excellence, intellectual and moral, combined in his mind, with endless variation; and, when he had scattered on the hero of the day the golden shower of wit and virtue, he had ready for him, whom he wished to court on the morrow, new wit and virtue with another stamp. Of this kind of meanness he never seems to decline the practice, or lament the necessity: he considers the great as entitled to encomiastic homage, and brings praise rather as a tribute than a gift, more delighted with the fertility of his invention, than mortified by the prostitution of his judgment. It is indeed not certain, that on these occasions his judgment much rebelled against his interest. There are minds which easily sink into submission, that look on grandeur with undistinguishing reverence, and discover no defect where there is elevation of rank and affluence of riches.

With his praises of others and of himself is always intermingled a strain of discontent and lamentation, a sullen growl of resentment, or a querulous murmur of distress. His works are undervalued, his merit

in unwarded, and "he has few thanks to pay his stars that he was born among Englishmen." To his critics he is sometimes contemptuous, sometimes resentful, and sometimes submissive. The writer who thinks his works formed for duration, mistakes his interest when he mentions his enemies. He degrades his own dignity by showing that he was affected by their censures, and gives lasting importance to names, which, left to themselves, would vanish from remembrance. From this principle Dryden did not often depart; his complaints are for the greater part general; he seldom pollutes his page with an adverse name. He condescended indeed to a controversy with Settle, in which he perhaps may be considered rather as assaulting than repelling; and since Settle is sunk into oblivion, his libel remains injurious only to himself.

Among answers to critics, no poetical attacks, or altercations, are to be included; they are like other poems, effusions of genius, produced as much to obtain praise as to obviate censure. These Dryden practised, and in these he excelled.

Of Collier, Blackmore, and Milbourne, he has made mention in the Preface of his Fables. To the censure of Collier, whose remarks may be rather termed admonitions than criticisms, he makes little reply; being, at the age of sixty-eight, attentive to better things than the claps of a playhouse. He complains of Collier's rudeness, and the "horse-play of his railery;" and asserts that "in many places he has perverted by his glosses the meaning" of what he censures; but in other things he confesses that he is justly taxed; and says, with great calmness and candour, "I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts or expressions of mine that can be truly accused of obscenity, immorality, or profaneness, and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend, he will be glad of my repentance."

Yet as our best dispositions are imperfect, he left standing in the same book a reflection on Collier of great asperity, and indeed of more asperity than wit.

Blackmore he represents as made his enemy by the poem of 'Absalom and Achitophel,' which "he thinks a little hard upon his fanatic patrons;" and charges him with borrowing the plan of his *Arthur* from the Preface to Juvenal, "though he had," says he, "the baseness not to acknowledge his benefactor, but instead of it to traduce me in a libel."

The libel in which Blackmore traduced him was a 'Satire upon Wit;' in which, having lamented the exuberance of false wit and the deficiency of true, he proposes that all wit should be re-coined before it is current, and appoints masters of assay who shall reject all that is light or 'debased.

' 'Tis true, that when the coarse and worthless dross
Is purged away, there will be mighty loss :
Even Congreve, Southern, manly Wycherly,
When thus refined, will grievous sufferers be.
Into the melting pot when Dryden comes,
What horrid stench will rise, what noisome fumes !
How will he shrink, when all his lewd allay,
And wicked mixture, shall be purged away !'

Thus stands the passage in the last edition; but in the original there was an abatement of the censure, beginning thus :

' But what remains will be so pure, 'twill bear
The examination of the most severe.'

Blackmore, finding the censure resented, and the civility disregarded, ungenerously omitted the softer part. Such variations discover a writer who consults his passions more than his virtue; and it may be reasonably supposed that Dryden imputes his enmity to its true cause.

Of Milbourne he wrote only in general terms, such as are always ready at the call of anger, whether

just or not: a short extract will be sufficient. "He pretends a quarrel to me, that I have fallen foul upon priesthood; if I have I am only to ask pardon of good priests, and am afraid his share of the reparation will come to little. Let him be satisfied that he shall never be able to force himself upon me for an adversary; I condemn him too much to enter into competition with him.

"As for the rest of those who have written against me, they are such scoundrels that they deserve not the least notice to be taken of them. Blackmore and Milbourne are only distinguished from the crowd by being remembered to their infamy."

Dryden indeed discovered, in many of his writings, an affected and absurd malignity to priests and priesthood, which naturally raised him many enemies, and which was sometimes as unseasonably resented as it was exerted. Trapp is angry that he calls the sacrificer in the *Georgics* "The Holy Butcher:" the translation is not indeed ridiculous; but Trapp's anger arises from his zeal, not for the author, but the priest; as if any reproach of the follies of Paganism could be extended to the preachers of Truth.

Dryden's dislike of the priesthood is imputed by Langbaine, and I think by Brown, to a repulse which he suffered when he solicited ordination; but he denies, in the Preface to his Fables, that he ever designed to enter into the Church; and such a denial he would not have hazarded, if he could have been convicted of falsehood.

Malevolence to the clergy is seldom at a great distance from irreverence of religion, and Dryden affords no exception to this observation. His writings exhibit many passages, which, with all the allowance that can be made for characters and occasions, are such as piety would not have admitted, and such as may vitiate light and unprincipled minds. But there is no reason for supposing that he disbe-

He left the religion which he disobeyed. He forgot his duty rather than disowned it. His tendency to profaneness is the effect of levity, negligence, and loose conversation, with a desire of accommodating himself to the corruption of the times, by venturing to be wicked as far as he durst. When he professed himself a convert to Popery, he did not pretend to have received any new conviction of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

The persecution of critics was not the worst of his vexations; he was much more disturbed by the importunities of want. His complaints of poverty are so frequently repeated, either with the dejection of weakness sinking in helpless misery, or the indignation of merit claiming its tribute from mankind, that it is impossible not to detest the age which could impose on such a man the necessity of such solicitations, or not to despise the man who could submit to such solicitations without necessity.

Whether by the world's neglect, or his own imprudence, I am afraid that the greatest part of his life was passed in exigences. Such outcries were surely never uttered but in severe pain. Of his supplies or his expenses no probable estimate can now be made. Except the salary of the Laureat, to which King James added the office of Historiographer, perhaps with some additional emoluments, his whole revenue seems to have been casual; and it is well known that he seldom lives frugally who lives by chance. Hope is always liberal; and they that trust her promises make little scruple of revelling to-day on the profits of the morrow.

Of his plays the profit was not great; and of the produce of his other works very little intelligence can be had. By discoursing with the *late* amiable Mr. Tonson, I could not find that any memorials of the transactions between his predecessor and Dryden had been preserved, except the following papers :

"I do hereby promise to pay John Dryden, Esq. or order, on the 25th of March, 1699, the sum of two hundred and fifty guineas, in consideration of ten thousand verses, which the said John Dryden, Esq. is to deliver to me Jacob Tonson, when finished, whereof seven thousand five hundred verses, more or less, are already in the said Jacob Tonson's possession. And I do hereby farther promise, and engage myself, to make up the said sum of two hundred and fifty guineas three hundred pounds sterling to the said John Dryden, Esq. his executors, administrators, or assigns, at the beginning of the second impression of the said ten thousand verses.

"In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this 20th day of March, 1698-9.

"JACOB TONSON."

"Sealed and delivered, being first duly stamp'd, pursuant to the acts of parliament for that purpose, in the presence of

"*Wm. Forthwick.*

"*Will. Comyns.*"

"March 24. 1698.

"Received then of Mr. Jacob Tonson the sum of two hundred sixty-eight pounds sixteen shillings, in pursuance of an agreement for ten thousand verses, to be delivered by me to the said Jacob Tonson, whereof I have already delivered to him about seven thousand five hundred, more or less; he the said Jacob Tonson being obliged to make up the aforesaid sum of two hundred sixty-eight pounds sixteen shillings three hundred pounds, at the beginning of the second impression of the aforesaid ten thousand verses;

"I say, received by me.

"*JACOB TONSON.*"

"Witness, *Charles Dryden.*"

Two hundred and fifty guineas, at 1*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* is 268*l.* 15*s.*

It is manifest, from the dates of this contract, that it relates to the volume of Fables, which contains about twelve thousand verses, and for which therefore the payment must have been afterwards enlarged.

I have been told of another letter yet remaining, in which he desires Tonson to bring him money, to pay for a watch which he had ordered for his son, and which the maker would not leave without the price.

The inevitable consequence of poverty is dependence. Dryden had probably no recourse in his exigences but to his bookseller. The particular character of Tonson I do not know; but the general conduct of traders was much less liberal in those times than in our own; their views were narrower, and their manners grosser. To the mercantile ruggedness of that race, the delicacy of the poet was sometimes exposed. Lord Bolingbroke, who in his youth had cultivated poetry, related to Dr. King of Oxford, that one day, when he visited Dryden, they heard, as they were conversing, another person entering the house. "This," said Dryden, "is Tonson. You will take care not to depart before he goes away: for I have not completed the sheet which I promised him; and if you leave me unprotected, I must suffer all the rudeness to which his resentment can prompt his tongue."

What rewards he obtained for his poems, besides the payment of the bookseller, cannot be known. Mr. Derrick, who consulted some of his relations, was informed that his Fables obtained five hundred pounds from the Duchess of Ormond; a present not unsuitable to the munificence of that splendid family; and he quotes Moyle, as relating that forty pounds were paid by a musical society for the use of *Alexander's Feast*.

In those days the economy of government was yet unsettled, and the payments of the Exchequer were dilatory and uncertain: of this disorder there is reason to believe that the Laureate sometimes felt the effects: for, in one of his Prefaces he complains of those, who, being intrusted with the distribution of the Prince's bounty, suffer those that depend upon it to languish in penury.

Of his petty habits or slight amusements, tradition has retained little. Of the only two men whom I have found to whom he was personally known, one told me, that at the house which he frequented, called Will's Coffee-house, the appeal upon any literary dispute was made to him: and the other related, that his armed chair, which in the winter had a settled and prescriptive place by the fire, was in the summer placed in the balcony, and that he called the two places his winter and his summer seat. This is all the intelligence which his two survivors afforded me.

One of his opinions will do him no honour in the present age, though in his own time, at least in the beginning of it, he was far from having it confined to himself. He put great confidence in the prognostications of Judicial Astrology. In the Appendix to the Life of Congreve is a narrative of some of his predictions wonderfully fulfilled; but I know not the writer's means of information, or character of veracity. That he had the configurations of the horoscope in his mind, and considered them as influencing the affairs of men, he does not forbear to hint.

'The utmost malice of the stars is pass'd.—
Now frequent *trines* the happier lights among,
And *high-raised Jove*, from his dark prison freed,
Those weights took off that on his planet hung,
Will gloriously the new-laid works succeed.'

He has elsewhere shown his attention to the planetary powers; and in the preface to his Fables has

endeavoured obliquely to justify his superstition by attributing the same to some of the ancients. The latter, added to this narrative, leaves no doubt of his notions or practice.

So slight and so scanty is the knowledge which I have been able to collect concerning the private life and domestic manners of a man whom every English generation must mention with reverence as a critic and a poet.

DRYDEN may be properly considered as the father of English criticism, as the writer who first taught us to determine upon principles the merit of composition. Of our former poets, the greatest dramatist wrote without rules, conducted through life and nature by a genius that rarely misled, and rarely deserted him. Of the rest, those who knew the laws of propriety had neglected to teach them.

Two 'Arts of English Poetry' were written in the days of Elizabeth by Webb and Puttenham, from which something might be learned, and a few hints had been given by Jonson and Cowley; but Dryden's 'Essay on Dramatic Poetry' was the first regular and valuable treatise on the art of writing.

He who, having formed his opinions in the present age of English literature, turns back to peruse this dialogue, will not perhaps find much increase of knowledge, or much novelty of instruction; but he is to remember that critical principles were then in the hands of a few, who had gathered them partly from the Ancients, and partly from the Italians and French. The structure of dramatic poems was then not generally understood. Audiences applauded by instinct; and poets perhaps often pleased by chance.

A writer who obtains his full purpose loses himself in his own lustre. Of an opinion which is no longer doubted, the evidence ceases to be examined. Of an art universally practised, the first teacher is

forgotten. Learning once made popular is no longer learning; it has the appearance of something which we have bestowed upon ourselves, as the dew appears to rise from the field which it refreshes.

To judge rightly of an author, we must transport ourselves to his time, and examine what were the wants of his contemporaries, and what were his means of supplying them. That which is easy at one time was difficult at another. Dryden at least imported his science, and gave his country what it wanted before; or rather, he imported only the materials, and manufactured them by his own skill.

The Dialogue on the Drama was one of his first essays of criticism, written when he was yet a timorous candidate for reputation, and therefore laboured with that diligence which he might allow himself somewhat to remit, when his name gave sanction to his positions, and his awe of the public was abated, partly by custom, and partly by success. It will not be easy to find, in all the opulence of our language, a treatise so artfully variegated with successive representations of opposite probabilities, so enlivened with imagery, so brightened with illustrations. His portraits of the English dramatists are wrought with great spirit and diligence. The account of Shakspeare may stand as a perpetual model of encomiastic criticism; exact without minuteness, and lofty without exaggeration. The praise lavished by Longinus, on the attestation of the heroes of Marathon, by Demosthenes, fades away before it. In a few lines is exhibited a character, so extensive in its comprehension, and so curious in its limitations, that nothing can be added, diminished, or reformed; nor can the editors and admirers of Shakspeare, in all their emulation of reverence, boast of much more than of having diffused and paraphrased this epitome of excellence, of having changed Dryden's gold for baser metal, of lower value, though of greater bulk.

In this, and in all his other essays on the same subject, the criticism of Dryden is the criticism of a poet; not a dull collection of theorems, nor a rude detection of faults, which perhaps the censor was not able to have committed; but a gay and vigorous dissertation, where delight is mingled with instruction, and where the author proves his right of judgment by his power of performance.

The different manner and effect with which critical knowledge may be conveyed, was perhaps never more clearly exemplified than in the performances of Rymer and Dryden. It was said of a dispute between two mathematicians, "*malim cum Scaligero errare, quam cum Clavio rectè sapere;*" that "it was more eligible to go wrong with one, than right with the other." A tendency of the same kind every mind must feel at the perusal of Dryden's Prefaces and Rymer's Discourses. With Dryden we are wandering in quest of Truth; whom we find, if we find her at all, dressed in the graces of elegance; and, if we miss her, the labour of the pursuit rewards itself; we are led only through fragrance and flowers. Rymer, without taking a nearer, takes a rougher way; every step is to be made through thorns and brambles; and Truth, if we meet her, appears repulsive by her mien, and ungraceful by her habit. Dryden's criticism has the majesty of a queen; Rymer's has the ferocity of a tyrant.

As he had studied with great diligence the art of Poetry, and enlarged or rectified his notions, by experience perpetually increasing, he had his mind stored with principles and observations; he poured out his knowledge with little labour; for of labour, notwithstanding the multiplicity of his productions, there is sufficient reason to suspect that he was not a lover. To write *con amore*, with fondness for the employment, with perpetual touches and retouches, with unwillingness to take leave of his own idea, and

an unwearied pursuit of unattainable perfection, was, I think, no part of his character.

His criticism may be considered as general or occasional. In his general precepts, which depend upon the nature of things, and the structure of the human mind, he may doubtless be safely recommended to the confidence of the reader; but his occasional and particular positions were sometimes interested, sometimes negligent, and sometimes capricious. It is not without reason that Trapp, speaking of the praises which he bestows on Palamon and Arcite, says, "*Novimus judicium Drydeni de poemate quodam Chauceri, pulchro. sane illo, et admodum laudando, nimirum quod non modo vere epicum sit, sed Iliada etiam atque Æneada æquet, imo superet. Sed novimus eodem tempore viri illius maximi non semper accuratissimas esse censuras, nec ad severissimam critices normam exactas: illo judice id plerumque optimum est, quod nunc præ manibus habet, et in quo nunc occupatur.*"

He is therefore by no means constant to himself. His defence and desertion of dramatic rhyme is generally known. Spence, in his remarks on Pope's *Odyssey*, produces what he thinks an unconquerable quotation from Dryden's preface to the *Æneid*, in favour of translating an epic poem into blank verse; but he forgets that when his author attempted the *Iliad*, some years afterwards, he departed from his own decision, and translated into rhyme.

When he has any objection to obviate, or any licence to defend, he is not very scrupulous about what he asserts, nor very cautious, if the present purpose be served, not to entangle himself in his own sophistries. But, when all arts are exhausted, like other hunted animals, he sometimes stands at bay; when he cannot disown the grossness of one of his plays, he declares that he knows not any law that prescribes morality to a comic poet.

His remarks on ancient or modern writers are not always to be trusted. His parallel of the versification of Ovid with that of Claudian has been very justly censured by Sewel⁹. His comparison of the first line of Virgil with the first of Statius is not happier. Virgil, he says, is soft and gentle, and would have thought Statius mad, if he had heard him thundering out

Quæ superimposito moles geminata colosso.

Statius perhaps heats himself, as he proceeds, to exaggeration somewhat hyperbolic; but undoubtedly Virgil would have been too hasty, if he had condemned him to straw for one sounding line. Dryden wanted an instance, and the first that occurred was impressed into the service.

What he wishes to say, he says at hazard; he cited Gorbuduc, which he had never seen; gives a false account of Chapman's versification; and discovers, in the preface to his Fables, that he translated the first book of the Iliad without knowing what was in the second.

It will be difficult to prove that Dryden ever made any great advances in literature. As having distinguished himself at Westminster under the tuition of Busby, who advanced his scholars to a height of knowledge very rarely attained in grammar-schools, he resided afterwards at Cambridge; it is not to be supposed, that his skill in the ancient languages was deficient, compared with that of common students; but his scholastic acquisitions seem not proportionate to his opportunities and abilities. He could not, like Milton or Cowley, have made his name illustrious merely by his learning. He mentions but few books, and those such as lie in the beaten track of regular study; from which if ever he departs, he is in danger of losing himself in unknown regions.

⁹ Preface to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Dr. J.

In his Dialogue on the Drama, he pronounces with great confidence that the Latin tragedy of *Medea* is not Ovid's, because it is not sufficiently interesting and pathetic. He might have determined the question upon surer evidence; for it is quoted by Quintilian as the work of Seneca; and the only line which remains in Ovid's play, for one line is left us, is not there to be found. There was therefore no need of the gravity of conjecture, or the discussion of plot or sentiment, to find what was already known upon higher authority than such discussions can ever reach.

His literature, though not always free from ostentation, will be commonly found either obvious, and made his own by the art of dressing it; or superficial, which, by what he gives, shows what he wanted; or erroneous, hastily collected, and negligently scattered.

Yet it cannot be said that his genius is ever unprovided of matter, or that his fancy languishes in penury of ideas. His works abound with knowledge, and sparkle with illustrations. There is scarcely any science or faculty that does not supply him with occasional images and lucky similitudes: every page discovers a mind very widely acquainted both with art and nature, and in full possession of great stores of intellectual wealth. Of him that knows much, it is natural to suppose that he has read with diligence: yet I rather believe that the knowledge of Dryden was gleaned from accidental intelligence and various conversation, by a quick apprehension, a judicious selection, and a happy memory, a keen appetite of knowledge, and a powerful digestion; by vigilance that permitted nothing to pass without notice, and a habit of reflection that suffered nothing useful to be lost. A mind like Dryden's, always curious, always active, with which every understanding was proud to be associated, and of which every one solicited the regard, by an

ambitious display of himself, had a more pleasant, perhaps a nearer way to knowledge than by the silent progress of solitary reading. I do not suppose that he despised books, or intentionally neglected them; but that he was carried out, by the impetuosity of his genius, to more vivid and speedy instructors; and that his studies were rather desultory and fortuitous than constant and systematical.

It must be confessed that he scarcely ever appears to want book-learning but when he mentions books; and to him may be transferred the praise which he gives his master, Charles:

‘ His conversation, wit, and parts,
His knowledge in the noblest useful arts,
Were such, dead authors could not give,
But habitudes of those that live :
Who, lighting him, did greater lights receive ;
He drain’d from all, and all they knew,
His apprehensions quick, his judgment true ;
That the most learn’d with shame confess,
His knowledge more, his reading only less.’



Of all this, however, if the proof be demanded, I will not undertake to give it; the atoms of probability, of which my opinion has been formed, lie scattered over all his works; and by him who thinks the question worth his notice, his works must be perused with very close attention.

Criticism, either didactic or defensive, occupies almost all his prose, except those pages which he has devoted to his patrons; but none of his prefaces were ever thought tedious. They have not the formality of a settled style, in which the first half of the sentence betrays the other. The clauses are never balanced, nor the periods modelled: every word seems to drop by chance, though it falls into its proper place. Nothing is cold or languid: the whole is airy, animated, and vigorous; what is little, is gay; what is great, is splendid. He may be thought to

mention himself too frequently; but, while he forces himself upon our esteem, we cannot refuse him to stand high in his own. Every thing is excused by the play of images, and the sprightliness of expression. Though all is easy, nothing is feeble; though all seems careless, there is nothing harsh; and though, since his earlier works more than a century has passed, they have nothing yet uncouth or obsolete.

He who writes much will not easily escape a manner, such a recurrence of particular modes as may be easily noted. Dryden is always *another and the same*; he does not exhibit a second time the same elegances in the same form, nor appears to have any art other than that of expressing with clearness what he thinks with vigour. His style could not easily be imitated, either seriously or ludicrously; for, being always equable and always varied, it has no prominent or discriminative characters. The beauty who is totally free from disproportion of parts and features cannot be ridiculed by an overcharged resemblance.

From his prose, however, Dryden derives only his accidental and secondary praise; the veneration with which his name is pronounced by every cultivator of English literature, is paid to him as he refined the language, improved the sentiments, and tuned the numbers of English Poetry.

After about half a century of forced thoughts, and rugged metre, some advances towards nature and harmony had been already made by Waller and Denham; they had shown that long discourses in rhyme grew more pleasing when they were broken into couplets, and that verse consisted not only in the number but the arrangement of syllables.

But though they did much, who can deny that they left much to do? Their works were not many, nor were their minds of very ample comprehension.

More examples of more modes of composition were necessary for the establishment of regularity, and the introduction of propriety in word and thought.

Every language of a learned nation necessarily divides itself into diction scholastic and popular, grave and familiar, elegant and gross; and from a nice distinction of these different parts arises a great part of the beauty of style. But, if we except a few minds, the favourites of nature, to whom their own original rectitude was in the place of rules, this delicacy of selection was little known to our authors; our speech lay before them in a heap of confusion; and every man took for every purpose what chance might offer him.

There was therefore before the time of Dryden no poetical diction, no system of words at once refined from the grossness of domestic use, and free from the harshness of terms appropriated to particular arts. Words too familiar, or too remote, defeat the purpose of a poet. From those sounds which we hear on small or on coarse occasions, we do not easily receive strong impressions, or delightful images; and words to which we are nearly strangers, whenever they occur, draw that attention on themselves which they should transmit to things.

Those happy combinations of words which distinguish poetry from prose had been rarely attempted; we had few elegances or flowers of speech; the roses had not yet been plucked from the bramble, or different colours had not been joined to enliven one another.

It may be doubted whether Waller and Denham could have overborne the prejudices which had long prevailed, and which even then were sheltered by the protection of Cowley. The new versification, as it was called, may be considered as owing its establishment to Dryden; from whose time it is apparent that English poetry has had no tendency to relapse to its former savageness,

The affluence and comprehension of our language is very illustriously displayed in our poetical translations of Ancient Writers; a work which the French seem to relinquish in despair, and which we were long unable to perform with dexterity. Ben Jonson thought it necessary to copy Horace almost word by word; Feltham, his contemporary and adversary, considers it as indispensably requisite in a translation to give line for line. It is said that Sandys, whom Dryden calls the best versifier of the last age, has struggled hard to comprise every book of the English *Metamorphoses* in the same number of verses with the original. Holyday had nothing in view but to show that he understood his author, with so little regard to the grandeur of his diction, or the volubility of his numbers, that his metres can hardly be called verses; they cannot be read without reluctance, nor will the labour always be rewarded by understanding them. Cowley saw that such copyers were a servile race; he asserted his liberty, and spread his wings so boldly that he left his authors. It was reserved for Dryden to fix the limits of poetical liberty, and give us just rules and examples of translation.

When languages are formed upon different principles, it is impossible that the same modes of expression should always be elegant in both. While they run on together, the closest translation may be considered as the best; but when they divaricate, each must take its natural course. Where correspondence cannot be obtained, it is necessary to be content with something equivalent. "Translation therefore," says Dryden, "is not so loose as paraphrase, nor so close as metaphrase."

All polished languages have different styles; the concise, the diffuse, the lofty, and the humble. In the proper choice of style consists the resemblance which Dryden principally exacts from the translator. He is to exhibit his author's thoughts in such a dress

of diction as the author would have given them, had his language been English: rugged magnificence is not to be softened; hyperbolical ostentation is not to be repressed; nor sententious affectation to have its point blunted. A translator is to be like his author; it is not his business to excel him.

The reasonableness of these rules seems sufficient for their vindication; and the effects produced by observing them were so happy, that I know not whether they were ever opposed but by Sir Edward Sherburne, a man whose learning was greater than his powers of poetry, and who, being better qualified to give the meaning than the spirit of Seneca, has introduced his version of three tragedies by a defence of close translation. The authority of Horace, which the new translators cited in defence of their practice, he has, by a judicious explanation, taken fairly from them; but reason wants not Horace to support it.

It seldom happens that all the necessary causes concur to any great effect: will is wanting to power, or power to will, or both are impeded by external obstructions. The exigences in which Dryden was condemned to pass his life are reasonably supposed to have blasted his genius, to have driven out his works in a state of immaturity, and to have intercepted the full-blown elegance which longer growth would have supplied.

Poverty, like other rigid powers, is sometimes too hastily accused. If the excellence of Dryden's works was lessened by his indigence, their number was increased; and I know not how it will be proved, that if he had written less he would have written better; or that indeed he would have undergone the toil of an author, if he had not been solicited by something more pressing than the love of praise.

But, as is said by his Sebastian,

'What had been, is unknown; what is, appears.'

We know that Dryden's several productions were so many successive expedients for his support; his plays were therefore often borrowed; and his poems were almost all occasional.

In an occasional performance no height of excellence can be expected from any mind, however fertile in itself, and however stored with acquisitions. He whose work is general and arbitrary has the choice of his matter, and takes that which his inclination and his studies have best qualified him to display and decorate. He is at liberty to delay his publication till he has satisfied his friends and himself, till he has reformed his first thoughts by subsequent examination, and polished away those faults which the precipitance of ardent composition is likely to leave behind it. Virgil is related to have poured out a great number of lines in the morning, and to have passed the day in reducing them to fewer.

The occasional poet is circumscribed by the narrowness of his subject. Whatever can happen to man has happened so often that little remains for fancy or invention. We have been all born; we have most of us been married: and so many have died before us, that our deaths can supply but few materials for a poet. In the fate of Princes the public has an interest; and what happens to them of good or evil, the poets have always considered as business for the Muse. But after so many inaugural gratulations, nuptial hymns, and funeral dirges, he must be highly favoured by nature, or by fortune, who says any thing not said before. Even war and conquest, however splendid, suggest no new images; the triumphant chariot of a victorious monarch can be decked only with those ornaments that have graced his predecessors.

Not only matter but time is wanting. The poem must not be delayed till the occasion is forgotten. The lucky moments of animated imagination cannot be attended; elegances and illustrations cannot be

multiplied by gradual accumulation; the composition must be dispatched, while conversation is yet busy, and admiration fresh; and haste is to be made, lest some other event should lay hold upon mankind.

Occasional compositions may however secure to a writer the praise both of learning and facility; for they cannot be the effect of long study, and must be furnished immediately from the treasures of the mind.

The death of Cromwell was the first public event which called forth Dryden's poetical powers. His heroic stanzas have beauties and defects; the thoughts are vigorous, and, though not always proper, show a mind replete with ideas; the numbers are smooth; and the diction, if not altogether correct, is elegant and easy.

Davenant was perhaps at this time his favourite author, though Gondibert never appears to have been popular; and from Davenant he learned to please his ear with the stanza of four lines alternately rhymed.

Dryden very early formed his versification; there are in this early production no traces of Donne's or Jonson's ruggedness: but he did not so soon free his mind from the ambition of forced conceits. In his verses on the Restoration, he says of the King's exile,

‘ He, toss’d by Fate—
Could taste no sweets of youth’s desired age,
But found his life too true a pilgrimage.’

And afterwards, to show how virtue and wisdom are increased by adversity, he makes this remark:

‘ Well might the ancient poets then confer
On Night the honour’d name of *counsellor*,
Since, struck with rays of prosperous fortune blind,
We light alone in dark afflictions find.’

His praise of Monk's dexterity comprises such a cluster of thoughts unallied to one another, as will not elsewhere be easily found :

' 'Twas Monk, whom Providence design'd to loose
Those real bonds false freedom did impose.
The blessed saints that watch'd this turning scene
Did from their stars with joyful wonder lean,
To see small clues draw vastest weights along,
Not in their bulk, but in their order strong.
Thus pencils can by one slight touch restore
Smiles to that changed face that wept before.
With ease such fond chimeras we pursue,
As fancy frames, for fancy to subdue :
But, when ourselves to action we betake,
It shuns the mint like gold that chemists make,
How hard was then his task, at once to be
What in the body natural we see!
Man's Architect distinctly did ordain
The charge of muscles, nerves, and of the brain,
Through viewless conduits spirits to dispense
The springs of motion from the seat of sense :
'Twas not the hasty product of a day,
But the well-ripen'd fruit of wise delay.
He, like a patient angler, ere he strook,
Would let them play awhile upon the hook.
Our healthful food the stomach labours thus,
At first embracing what it strait doth crush.
Wise leeches will not vain receipts obtrude,
While growing pains pronounce the humours crude ;
Deaf to complaints, they wait upon the ill,
Till some safe crisis authorize their skill.'

He had not yet learned, indeed he never learned well, to forbear the improper use of mythology. After having rewarded the Heathen deities for their care,

' With Alga who the sacred altar strows ?
To all the sea-gods Charles an offering owes ;
A bull to thee, Portunus, shall be slain ;
A ram to you, ye Tempests of the Main.'

He tells us, in the language of Religion,

' Prayer storm'd the skies, and ravish'd Charles from
thence,
As Heaven itself is took by violence.'

And afterwards mentions one of the most awful passages of Sacred History.

Other conceits there are, too curious to be quite omitted ; as,

‘ For by example most we sinn’d before,
And, glass-like, clearness mix’d with frailty bore.’

How far he was yet from thinking it necessary to found his sentiments on nature, appears from the extravagance of his fictions and hyperboles :

‘ The winds, that never moderation knew,
Afraid to blow too much, too faintly blew ;
Or, out of breath with joy, could not enlarge
Their straiten’d lungs.—
It is no longer motion cheats your view ;
As you meet it, the land approacheth you ;
The land returns, and in the white it wears
The marks of penitence, and sorrow bears.’

I know not whether this fancy, however little be its value, was not borrowed. A French poet read to Malherbe some verses, in which he represents France as moving out of its place to receive the king. “ Though this,” said Malherbe, “ was in my time, I do not remember it.”

His poem on the Coronation has a more even tenor of thought. . Some lines deserve to be quoted.

‘ You have already quench’d sedition’s brand ;
And zeal, that burn’d it, only warms the land ;
The jealous sects that durst not trust their cause,
So far from their own will as to the laws,
Him for their umpire and their synod take,
And their appeal alone to Cæsar make.’

Here may be found one particle of that old versification, of which, I believe, in all his works, there is not another :

‘ Nor is it duty, or our hope alone,
Creates that joy, but full *fruition*.’

In the verses to the Lord Chancellor Clarendon, two years afterwards, is a conceit so hopeless at the

first view, that few would have attempted it; and so successfully laboured, that though at last it gives the reader more perplexity than pleasure, and seems hardly worth the study that it costs, yet it must be valued as a proof of a mind at once subtle and comprehensive;

‘ In open prospect nothing bounds our eye,
 Until the earth seems join’d unto the sky :
 So in this hemisphere our utmost view
 Is only bounded by our king and you :
 Our sight is limited where you are join’d,
 And beyond that no farther Heaven can find.
 So well your virtues do with his agree,
 That though your orbs of different greatness be,
 Yet both are for each other’s use disposed,
 His to enclose, and yours to be enclosed.
 Nor could another in your room have been,
 Except an emptiness had come between.’

The comparison of the Chancellor to the Indies leaves all resemblance too far behind it :

‘ And as the Indies were not found before
 Those rich perfumes which from the happy shore
 The winds upon their balmy wings convey’d,
 Whose guilty sweetness first their world betray’d ;
 So by your counsels we are brought to view
 A new and undiscover’d world in you.’

There is another comparison, for there is little else in the poem, of which, though perhaps it cannot be explained into plain prosaic meaning, the mind perceives enough to be delighted, and readily forgives its obscurity, for its magnificence :

‘ How strangely active are the arts of peace,
 Whose restless motions less than wars do cease !
 Peace is not freed from labour, but from noise ;
 And war more force, but not more pains employs.
 Such is the mighty swiftness of your mind,
 That, like the Earth’s, it leaves our sense behind ;
 While you so smoothly turn and roll our sphere,
 That rapid motion does but rest appear.

For as in nature's swiftness, with the throng
 Of flying orbs while ours is borne along,
 All seems at rest to the deluded eye,
 Moved by the soul of the same harmony :
 So, carry'd on by your unwearied care,
 We rest in peace, and yet in motion share.'

To this succeed four lines, which perhaps afford Dryden's first attempt at those penetrating remarks on human nature, for which he seems to have been peculiarly formed :

' Let envy then those crimes within you see,
 From which the happy never must be free ;
 Envy, that does with misery reside,
 The joy and the revenge of ruin'd pride.'

Into this poem he seems to have collected all his powers; and after this he did not often bring upon his anvil such stubborn and unmalleable thoughts: but, as a specimen of his abilities to unite the most unsociable matter, he has concluded with lines of which I think not myself obliged to tell the meaning.

' Yet unimpair'd with labours, or with time,
 Your age but seems to a new youth to climb.
 Thus heavenly bodies do our time beget,
 And measure change, but share no part of it :
 And still it shall without a weight increase,
 Like this new year, whose motions never cease.
 For since the glorious course you have begun
 Is led by Charles, as that is by the sun,
 It must both weightless and immortal prove,
 Because the centre of it is above.'

In the ' Annus Mirabilis' he returned to the quatrain, which from that time he totally quitted, perhaps from experience of its inconvenience, for he complains of its difficulty. This is one of his greatest attempts. He had subjects equal to his abilities, a great Naval War, and the Fire of London. Battles have always been described in heroic poetry; but a sea-fight and artillery had yet something of novelty. New arts are long in the world before

poets describe them; for they borrow every thing from their predecessors, and commonly derive very little from nature or from life. Boileau was the first French writer that had ever hazarded in verse the mention of modern war, or the effects of gunpowder. We, who are less afraid of novelty, had already possession of those dreadful images. Waller had described a sea-fight. Milton had not yet transferred the invention of fire-arms to the rebellious angels.

This poem is written with great diligence, yet does not fully answer the expectation raised by such subjects and such a writer. With the stanza of Davenant he has sometimes his vein of parenthesis, and incidental disquisition, and stops his narrative for a wise remark.

The general fault is, that he affords more sentiment than description, and does not so much impress scenes upon the fancy, as deduce consequences and make comparisons.

The initial stanzas have rather too much resemblance to the first lines of Waller's poem on the war with Spain; perhaps such a beginning is natural, and could not be avoided without affectation. Both Waller and Dryden might take their hint from the poem on the civil war of Rome, "*Orbem jam totum,*" &c.

Of the king collecting his navy, he says,

' It seems, as every ship their sovereign knows,
His awful summons they so soon obey;
So hear the scaly herds when Proteus blows,
And so to pasture follow through the sea.'

It would not be hard to believe that Dryden had written the two first lines seriously, and that some wag had added the two latter in burlesque. Who would expect the lines that immediately follow, which are indeed perhaps indecently hyperbolical, but certainly in a mode totally different?

' To see this fleet upon the ocean move,
 Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies ;
 And Heaven, as if there wanted lights above,
 For tapers made two glaring comets rise.'

The description of the attempt at Bergen will afford a very complete specimen of the descriptions in this poem :

' And now approach'd their fleet from India, fraught
 With all the riches of the rising sun :
 And precious sand from Southern climates brought,
 The fatal regions where the war begun.

Like hunted castors, conscious of their store,
 Their way-laid wealth to Norway's coast they bring :
 Then first the North's cold bosom spices bore,
 And winter brooded on the Eastern spring.

By the rich scent we found our perfumed prey,
 Which, flank'd with rocks, did close in covert lie ;
 And round about their murdering cannon lay,
 At once to threaten and invite the eye.

Fiercer than cannon; and than rocks more hard,
 The English undertake the' unequal war :
 Seven ships alone, by which the port is barr'd,
 Besiege the Indies, and all Denmark dare.

These fight like husbands, but like lovers those :
 These fain would keep, and those more fain enjoy :
 And to such height their frantic passion grows,
 That what both love, both hazard to destroy :

Amidst whole heaps of spices lights a ball,
 And now their odours arm'd against them fly :
 Some preciously by shatter'd porcelain fall,
 And some by aromatic splinters die :

And, though by tempests of the prize bereft,
 In Heaven's inclemency some ease we find ;
 Our foes we vanquish'd by our valour left,
 And only yielded to the seas and wind.'

In this manner is the sublime too often mingled with the ridiculous. The Dutch seek a shelter for a wealthy fleet: this surely needed no illustration; yet they must fly, not like all the rest of mankind on the same occasion, but "like hunted castors;"

and they might with strict propriety be hunted; for we winded them by our noses—their *perfumes* betrayed them. The *Husband* and the *Lover*, though of more dignity than the castor, are images too domestic to mingle properly with the horrors of war. The two quatrains that follow are worthy of the author.

The account of the different sensations with which the two fleets retired, when the night parted them, is one of the fairest flowers of English poetry:

‘ The night comes on, we eager to pursue
The combat still, and they ashamed to leave;
Till the last streaks of dying day withdrew,
And doubtful moonlight did our rage deceive.

In the’ English fleet each ship resounds with joy,
And loud applause of their great leader’s fame:
In fiery dreams the Dutch they still destroy,
And, slumbering, smile at the imagined flame.

Not so the Holland fleet, who, tired and done,
Stretch’d on their decks, like weary oxen lie;
Faint sweats all down their mighty members run,
(Vast bulks, which little souls but ill supply.)

In dreams they fearful precipices tread,
Or, shipwreck’d, labour to some distant shore:
Or, in dark churches, walk among the dead;
They wake with horror, and dare sleep no more.’

It is a general rule in poetry, that all appropriated terms of art should be sunk in general expressions, because poetry is to speak an universal language. This rule is still stronger with regard to arts not liberal, or confined to few, and therefore far removed from common knowledge; and of this kind, certainly, is technical navigation. Yet Dryden was of opinion, that a sea-fight ought to be described in the nautical language; “and certainly,” says he, “as those, who in a logical disputation keep to general terms, would hide a fallacy, so those who do it in poetical description would veil their ignorance.”

Let us then appeal to experience; for by experi-

ence at last we learn as well what will please as what will profit. In the battle, his terms seem to have been blown away; but he deals them liberally in the dock:

‘ So here some pick out bullets from the side,
 Some drive old *oakum* through each *seam* and rift :
 Their left-hand does the *calking-iron* guide,
 The rattling *mallet* with the right they lift.
 With boiling pitch another near at hand
 (From friendly Sweden brought) the *seams in-stops* ;
 Which, well laid o’er, the salt-sea waves withstand,
 And shake them from the rising beak in drops.
 Some the *gall’d* ropes with dawby *marling* bind,
 Or sea-cloth masts with strong *tarpauling* coats :
 To try new *shrouds* one mounts into the wind,
 And one below their ease or stiffness notes.’

I suppose there is not one term which every reader does not wish away.

His digression to the original and progress of navigation, with his prospect of the advancement which it shall receive from the Royal Society, then newly instituted, may be considered as an example seldom equalled of seasonable excursion and artful return.

One line, however, leaves me discontented; he says, that, by the help of the philosophers,

‘ Instructed ships shall sail to quick commerce,
 By which remotest regions are allied :’—

which he is constrained to explain in a note “ by a more exact measure of longitude.” It had better become Dryden’s learning and genius to have laboured science into poetry, and have shown, by explaining longitude, that verse did not refuse the ideas of philosophy.

His description of the Fire is painted by resolute meditation, out of a mind better formed to reason than to feel. The conflagration of a city, with all its tumults of concomitant distress, is one of the most dreadful spectacles which this world can offer

to human eyes; yet it seems to raise little emotion in the breast of the poet; he watches the flame coolly from street to street, with now a reflection, and now a simile, till at last he meets the King, for whom he makes a speech, rather tedious in a time so busy; and then follows again the progress of the fire.

There are, however, in this part some passages that deserve attention; as in the beginning;

'The diligence of trades and noiseful gain,
And luxury, more late, asleep was laid!
All was the Night's, and in her silent reign
No sound the rest of Nature did invade
In this deep quiet'——

The expression "All was the Night's" is taken from Seneca, who remarks on Virgil's line,

Omnia noctis erant, placida composita quiete,

that he might have concluded better,

Omnia noctis erant.

The following quatrain is vigorous and animated;

The ghosts of traitors from the bridge descend
With bold fanatic spectres to rejoice;
About the fire into a dance they bend,
And sing their sabbath notes with feeble voice.'

His prediction of the improvements which shall be made in the new city is elegant and poetical, and, with an event which Poets cannot always boast, has been happily verified. The poem concludes with a simile that might have better been omitted.

Dryden, when he wrote this poem, seems not yet fully to have formed his versification, or settled his system of propriety.

From this time he addicted himself almost wholly to the stage, "to which," says he, "my genius never much inclined me," merely as the most profitable market for poetry. By writing tragedies in

rhyme, he continued to improve his diction and his numbers. According to the opinion of Harte, who had studied his works with great attention, he settled his principles of versification in 1676, when he produced the play of 'Aureng Zebe;' and according to his own account of the short time in which he wrote 'Tyranic Love,' and the 'State of Innocence,' he soon obtained the full effect of diligence, and added facility to exactness.

Rhyme has been so long banished from the theatre, that we know not its effects upon the passions of an audience; but it has this convenience, that sentences stand more independent on each other, and striking passages are therefore easily selected and retained. Thus the description of Night in the 'Indian Emperor,' and the rise and fall of Empire in the 'Conquest of Granada,' are more frequently repeated than any lines in 'All for Love,' or 'Don Sebastian.'

To search his plays for vigorous sallies and sententious elegances, or to fix the dates of any little pieces which he wrote by chance, or by solicitation, were labour too tedious and minute.

His dramatic labours did not so wholly absorb his thoughts, but that he promulgated the laws of translation in a preface to the English Epistles of Ovid; one of which he translated himself, and another in conjunction with the Earl of Mulgrave.

'Absalom and Achitophel' is a work so well known, that particular criticism is superfluous. If it be considered as a poem political and controversial, it will be found to comprise all the excellences of which the subject is susceptible; acrimony of censure, elegance of praise, artful delineation of characters, variety and vigour of sentiment, happy turns of language, and pleasing harmony of numbers; and all these raised to such a height as can scarcely be found in any other English composition.

It is not, however, without faults; some lines are inelegant or improper, and too many are irreligiously licentious. The original structure of the poem was defective; allegories drawn to great length will always break; Charles could not run continually parallel with David.

The subject had likewise another inconvenience: it admitted little imagery or description; and a long poem of mere sentiments easily becomes tedious; though all the parts are forcible, and every line kindles new rapture, the reader, if not relieved by the interposition of something that soothes the fancy, grows weary of admiration, and defers the rest.

As an approach to the historical truth was necessary, the action and catastrophe were not in the poet's power; there is therefore an unpleasing disproportion between the beginning and the end. We are alarmed by a faction formed of many sects, various in their principles, but agreeing in their purpose of mischief, formidable for their numbers, and strong by their supports; while the King's friends are few and weak. The chiefs on either part are set forth to view: but when expectation is at the height, the King makes a speech, and

‘Henceforth a series of new times began.’

Who can forbear to think of an enchanted castle, with a wide moat and lofty battlements, walls of marble and gates of brass, which vanishes at once into air, when the destined knight blows his horn before it?

In the second part, written by Tate, there is a long insertion, which, for its poignancy of satire, exceeds any part of the former. Personal resentment, though no laudable motive to satire, can add great force to general principles. Self-love is a busy prompter.

‘The Medal,’ written upon the same principles

with 'Absalom and Achitophel,' but upon a narrower plan, gives less pleasure, though it discovers equal abilities in the writer. The superstructure cannot extend beyond the foundation; a single character or incident cannot furnish as many ideas, as a series of events, or multiplicity of agents. This poem therefore, since time has left it to itself, is not much read, nor perhaps generally understood; yet it abounds with touches both of humorous and serious satire. The picture of a man whose propensions to mischief are such, that his best actions are but inability of wickedness, is very skilfully delineated and strongly coloured:

'Power was his aim; but, thrown from that pretence,
The wretch turn'd loyal in his own defence,
And malice reconciled him to his prince.
Him, in the anguish of his soul, he served;
Rewarded faster still than he deserved:
Behold him now exalted into trust;
His counsels oft convenient, seldom just;
Even in the most sincere advice he gave,
He had a grudging still to be a knave.
The frauds, he learn'd in his fanatic years,
Made him uneasy in his lawful gears,
At least as little honest as he could,
And, like white witches, mischievously good.
To this first bias, longingly, he leans;
And rather would be great by wicked means.'

The 'Threnodia,' which, by a term I am afraid neither authorized nor analogical, he calls *Augustalis*, is not among his happiest productions. Its first and obvious defect is the irregularity of its metre, to which the ears of that age, however, were accustomed. What is worse, it has neither tenderness nor dignity; it is neither magnificent nor pathetic. He seems to look round him for images which he cannot find, and what he has he distorts by endeavouring to enlarge them. "He is," he says, "petrified with grief;" but the marble sometimes relents, and trickles in a joke.

' The sons of art all medicines try'd,
 And every noble remedy apply'd :
 With emulation each essay'd
 His utmost skill ; *nay, more, they pray'd :*
 Was never losing game with better conduct play'd.'

He had been a little inclined to merriment before, upon the prayers of a nation for their dying sovereign ; nor was he serious enough to keep Heathen fables out of his religion :

' With him the' innumerable crowd of armed prayers
 Knock'd at the gates of Heaven, and knock'd aloud ;
The first well-meaning rude petitioners,
 All for his life assail'd the throne,
 All would have bribed the skies by offering up their own.
 So great a throng not Heaven itself could bar ;
'Twas almost borne by force as in the giants' war.
 The prayers, at least, for his reprieve, were heard ;
 His death, like Hezekiah's, was deferr'd.'

There is throughout the composition a desire of splendour without wealth. In the conclusion he seems too much pleased with the prospect of the new reign to have lamented his old master with much sincerity.

He did not miscarry in this attempt for want of skill either in lyric or elegiac poetry. His poem on the death of Mrs. Killigrew is undoubtedly the noblest ode that our language ever has produced. The first part flows with a torrent of enthusiasm, "*Fervet immensusque ruit.*" All the stanzas indeed are not equal. An Imperial crown cannot be one continued diamond ; the gems must be held together by some less valuable matter.

In his first ode for Cecilia's day, which is lost in the splendour of the second, there are passages which would have dignified any other poet. The first stanza is vigorous and elegant, though the word *disposon* is too technical, and the rhymes are too remote from one another.

' From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
 This universal frame began ;
 When Nature underneath a heap of jarring atoms lay,
 And could not heave her head,
 The tuneful voice was heard from high,
 Arise, ye more than dead.
 Then cold and hot, and moist and dry,
 In order to their stations leap,
 And music's power obey.
 From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
 This universal frame began.
 From harmony to harmony
 Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
 The diapason closing full in man.'

The conclusion is likewise striking; but it includes an image so awful in itself, that it can owe little to poetry; and I could wish the antithesis of *music untuning* had found some other place.

' As from the power of sacred lays
 The spheres began to move,
 And sung the great Creator's praise
 To all the bless'd above :

So, when the last and dreadful hour
 This crumbling pageant shall devour,
 The trumpet shall be heard on high,
 The dead shall live, the living die,
 And music shall untune the sky.'

Of his skill in elegy he has given a specimen in his 'Eleonora,' of which the following lines discover their author :

' Though all these rare endowments of the mind
 Were in a narrow space of life confined,
 The figure was with full perfection crown'd,
 Though not so large an orb, as truly round :
 As when in glory, through the public place,
 The spoils of conquer'd nations were to pass,
 And but one day for triumph was allow'd,
 The consul was constrain'd his pomp to crowd ;
 And so the swift procession hurry'd on,
 That all, though not distinctly, might be shown ;
 So, in the straiten'd bounds of life confined,
 She gave but glimpses of her glorious mind :

And multitudes of virtues pass'd along ;
 Each pressing foremost in the mighty throng,
 Ambitious to be seen, and then make room
 For greater multitudes that were to come.
 Yet unemploy'd no minute slipp'd away ;
 Moments were precious in so short a stay.
 The haste of Heaven to have her was so great,
 That some were single acts, though each complete ;
 And every act stood ready to repeat.

This piece, however, is not without its faults ;
 there is so much likeness in the initial comparison,
 that there is no illustration. As a king would be lamented, Elenora was lamented :

‘ As, when some great and gracious monarch dies,
 Soft whispers, first, and mournful murmurs, rise
 Among the sad attendants ; then the sound
 Soon gathers voice, and spreads the news around,
 Through town and country, till the dreadful blast
 Is blown to distant colonies at last,
 Who, then, perhaps, were offering vows in vain,
 For his long life, and for his happy reign ;
 So slowly, by degrees, unwilling Fame
 Did matchless Eleonora’s fate proclaim,
 Till public as the loss the news became.

This is little better than to say in praise of a shrub, that it is as green as a tree ; or of a brook, that it waters a garden, as a river waters a country.

Dryden confesses that he did not know the lady whom he celebrates ; the praise, being therefore inevitably general, fixes no impression upon the reader, nor excites any tendency to love, nor much desire of imitation. Knowledge of the subject is to the poet what durable materials are to the architect.

The ‘ *Religio Laici*,’ which borrows its title from the ‘ *Religio Medici*’ of Browne, is almost the only work of Dryden which can be considered as a voluntary effusion ; in this, therefore, it might be hoped, that the full effulgence of his genius would be found. But unhappily the subject is rather argumentative

than poetical; he intended only a specimen of metrical disputation :

‘ And this unpolish’d rugged verse I chose,
As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose.’

This, however, is a composition of great excellence in its kind, in which the familiar is very properly diversified with the solemn, and the grave with the humorous; in which metre has neither weakened the force, nor clouded the perspicuity of argument; nor will it be easy to find another example equally happy of this middle kind of writing, which, though prosaic in some parts, rises to high poetry in others, and neither towers to the skies, nor creeps along the ground.

Of the same kind, or not far distant from it, is the ‘*Hind and Panther*,’ the longest of all Dryden’s original poems; an allegory intended to comprise and to decide the controversy between the Romanists and Protestants. The scheme of the work is injudicious and incommodious; for what can be more absurd than that one beast should counsel another to rest her faith upon a pope and council? He seems well enough skilled in the usual topics of argument, endeavours to show the necessity of an infallible judge, and reproaches the Reformers with want of unity; but is weak enough to ask, why, since we see without knowing how, we may not have an infallible judge without knowing where?

The *Hind* at one time is afraid to drink at the common brook, because she may be worried; but, walking home with the *Panther*, talks by the way of the *Nicene Fathers*, and at last declares herself to be the Catholic Church.

This absurdity was very properly ridiculed in the ‘*City Mouse and Country Mouse*’ of Montague and Prior; and in the detection and censure of the incongruity of the fiction chiefly consists the value of their performance, which, whatever reputation it might

obtain by the help of temporary passions, seems, to readers almost a century distant, not very forcible or animated.

Pope, whose judgment was perhaps a little bribed by the subject, used to mention this poem as the most correct specimen of Dryden's versification. It was indeed written when he had completely formed his manner, and may be supposed to exhibit, negligence excepted, his deliberate and ultimate scheme of metre.

We may therefore reasonably infer, that he did not approve the perpetual uniformity which confines the sense to couplets, since he has broken his lines in the initial paragraph.

' A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchanged,
Fed on the lawns, and in the forest ranged :
Without unspotted, innocent within,
She fear'd no danger, for she knew no sin.
Yet had she oft been chased with horns and hounds,
And Scythian shafts, and many-winged wounds
Aim'd at her heart ; was often forced to fly,
And doom'd to death, though fated not to die.'

These lines are lofty, elegant, and musical, notwithstanding the interruption of the pause, of which the effect is rather increase of pleasure by variety, than offence by ruggedness.

To the first part it was his intention, he says, " to give the majestic turn of heroic poesy ;" and perhaps he might have executed his design not unsuccessfully, had not an opportunity of satire, which he cannot forbear, fallen sometimes in his way. The character of a Presbyterian, whose emblem is the *Wolf*, is not very heroically majestic.

' More haughty than the rest, the wolfish race
Appear with belly gaunt and famish'd face ;
Never was so deform'd a beast of grace.
His ragged tail betwixt his legs he wears,
Close clapp'd for shame ; but his rough crest he rears,
And pricks up his predestinating ears.'

His general character of the other sorts of beasts

that never go to church, though sprightly and keen, has, however, not much of heroic poesy:

' These are the chief ; to number o'er the rest,
And stand like Adam naming every beast,
Were weary work ; nor will the Muse describe
A slimy-born, and sun-begotten tribe,
Who, far from steeples and their sacred sound,
In fields their sullen conventicles found.
These gross, half-animated lumps I leave ;
Nor can I think what thoughts they can conceive ;
But, if they think at all, 'tis sure no higher
Than matter, put in motion, may aspire ;
Souls that can scarce ferment their mass of clay,
So drossy, so divisible are they,
As would but serve pure bodies for allay ;
Such souls as shards produce, such beetle things
As only buz to Heaven with evening wings ;
Strike in the dark, offending but by chance ;
Such are the blindfold blows of ignorance.
They know no being, and but hate a name ;
To them the Hind and Panther are the same.'

• One more instance, and that taken from the narrative part, where style was more in his choice, will show how steadily he kept his resolution of heroic dignity.

' For when the herd, sufficed, did late repair
To ferny heaths and to their forest lair,
She made a mannerly excuse to stay,
Proffering the Hind to wait her half the way ;
That, since the sky was clear, an hour of talk
Might help her to beguile the tedious walk.
With much good-will the motion was embraced,
To chat awhile on their adventures past :
Nor had the grateful Hind so soon forgot
Her friend and fellow-sufferer in the plot.
Yet, wondering how of late she grew estranged,
Her forehead cloudy and her countenance changed,
She thought this hour the' occasion would present
To learn her secret cause of discontent,
Which well she hoped might be with ease redress'd,
Considering her a well-bred civil beast,
And more a gentlewoman than the rest.
After some common talk what rumours ran,
The lady of the spotted muff began.'

The second and third parts he professes to have reduced to diction more familiar and more suitable to dispute and conversation; the difference is not, however, very easily perceived; the first has familiar, and the two others have sonorous lines. The original incongruity runs through the whole; the king is now *Cæsar*, and now the *Lion*; and the name *Pan* is given to the Supreme Being.

But when this constitutional absurdity is forgiven, the poem must be confessed to be written with great smoothness of metre, a wide extent of knowledge, and an abundant multiplicity of images; the controversy is embellished with pointed sentences, diversified by illustrations, and enlivened by sallies of invective. Some of the facts to which allusions are made are now become obscure, and perhaps there may be many satirical passages little understood.

As it was by its nature a work of defiance, a composition which would naturally be examined with the utmost acrimony of criticism, it was probably laboured with uncommon attention, and there are, indeed, few negligences in the subordinate parts. The original impropriety, and the subsequent unpopularity of the subject, added to the ridiculousness of its first elements, has sunk it into neglect; but it may be usefully studied, as an example of poetical ratiocination, in which the argument suffers little from the metre.

In the poem on 'the Birth of the Prince of Wales,' nothing is very remarkable but the exorbitant adulation, and that insensibility of the precipice on which the king was then standing, which the Laureate apparently shared with the rest of the courtiers. A few months cured him of controversy, dismissed him from court, and made him again a play-wright and translator.

Of Juvenal there had been a translation by Staphylton, and another by Holiday; neither of them is *very poetical*. Staphylton is more smooth; and Holi-

day's is more esteemed for the learning of his notes. A new version was proposed to the poets of that time, and undertaken by them in conjunction. The main design was conducted by Dryden, whose reputation was such that no man was unwilling to serve the Muses under him.

The general character of this translation will be given, when it is said to preserve the wit, but to want the dignity, of the original. The peculiarity of Juvenal, is a mixture of gaiety and stateliness, of pointed sentences, and declamatory grandeur. His points have not been neglected; but his grandeur none of the band seemed to consider as necessary to be imitated, except Creech, who undertook the thirteenth satire. It is therefore perhaps possible to give a better representation of that great satirist, even in those parts which Dryden himself has translated, some passages excepted, which will never be excelled.

With Juvenal was published Persius, translated wholly by Dryden. This work, though like all other productions of Dryden it may have shining parts, seems to have been written merely for wages, in an uniform mediocrity, without any eager endeavour after excellence, or laborious effort of the mind.

There wanders an opinion among the readers of poetry, that one of these satires is an exercise of the school. Dryden says, that he once translated it at school; but not that he preserved or published the juvenile performance.

Not long afterwards he undertook perhaps the most arduous work of its kind, a translation of Virgil, for which he had shown how well he was qualified by his version of the *Pollio*, and two episodes, one of *Nisus and Euryalus*, the other of *Mezentius and Lausus*.

In the comparison of Homer and Virgil, the discriminative excellence of Homer is elevation and

comprehension of thought, and that of Virgil is grace and splendour of diction. The beauties of Homer are therefore difficult to be lost, and those of Virgil difficult to be retained. The massy trunk of sentiment is safe by its solidity, but the blossoms of elocution easily drop away. The author, having the choice of his own images, selects those which he can best adorn; the translator must, at all hazards, follow his original, and express thoughts which perhaps he would not have chosen. When to this primary difficulty is added the inconvenience of a language so much inferior in harmony to the Latin, it cannot be expected that they who read the *Georgics* and the *Æneid* should be much delighted with any version.

All these obstacles Dryden saw, and all these he determined to encounter. The expectation of his work was undoubtedly great; the nation considered its honour as interested in the event. One gave him the different editions of his author, another helped him in the subordinate parts. The arguments of the several books were given him by Addison.

The hopes of the public were not disappointed. He produced, says Pope, "the most noble and spirited translation that I know in any language." It certainly excelled whatever had appeared in English, and appears to have satisfied his friends, and, for the most part, to have silenced his enemies. Milbourne, indeed, a clergyman, attacked it; but his outrages seem to be the ebullitions of a mind agitated by stronger resentment than bad poetry can excite, and previously resolved not to be pleased.

His criticism extends only to the Preface, Pastorals, and *Georgics*; and, as he professes to give his antagonist an opportunity of reprisal, he has added his own version of the first and fourth Pastorals, and the first *Georgic*. The world has forgotten his book; but, since his attempt has given him a place in lite-

rary history, I will preserve a specimen of his criticism, by inserting his remarks on that invocation before the first Georgic, and of his poetry, by annexing his own version.

Ver. 1.

‘ What makes a plenteous harvest, when to turn
The fruitful soil, and when to sow the corn.’

“ It’s *unlucky*, they say, to *stumble at the threshold*: but what has a *plenteous harvest* to do here? *Virgil* would not pretend to prescribe *rules* for that which depends not on the *husbandman’s* care, but the *disposition of Heaven* altogether. Indeed, the *plenteous crop* depends somewhat on the *good method of tillage*; and where the *land’s* ill-manur’d, the *corn*, without a miracle, can be but *indifferent*; but the *harvest* may be *good*, which is its *properest* epithet, though the *husbandman’s skill* were never so *indifferent*. The next sentence is too *literal*, and *when to plough* had been *Virgil’s* meaning, and intelligible to every body; and *when to sow the corn*, is a needless addition.”

Ver. 3.

‘ The care of sheep, of oxen, and of kine,
And when to geld the lambs, and shear the swine.’

“ would as well have fallen under the *cura boum, qui cultus habendo sit pecori*, as Mr. *D’s* deduction of particulars.”

Ver. 5.

‘ The birth and genius of the frugal bee
I sing, Mæcenas, and I sing to thee.’

“ But where did *experientia* ever signify *birth and genius*? or what ground was there for such a *figure* in this place? How much more manly is Mr. *Ogylby’s* version !”

‘ What makes rich grounds, in what celestial signs
’Tis good to plough, and marry elms with vines ;
What best fits cattle, what with sheep agrees,
And several arts improving frugal bees ;
I sing, Mæcenas.’

"Which four lines, though faulty enough, are yet much more to the purpose than Mr. *D*'s six."

Ver. 22.

'From fields and mountains to my song repair.'

"For *patrium linquens nemus, saltusque Lycæi*——
Very well explained!"

Ver. 23, 24.

'Inventor Pallas, of the fattening oil,
Thou founder of the plough, and ploughman's toil!'

"Written as if *these* had been *Pallas's invention*.
The ploughman's toil's impertinent."

Ver. 25.

'——The shroud-like cypress——'

"Why *shroud-like*? Is a *cypress* pulled up by the roots, which the *sculpture* in the last *Eclogue* fills *Silvanus's* hand with, so very like a *shroud*? Or did not Mr. *D*. think of that kind of *cypress* used often for *scarves* and *hatbands* at funerals formerly, or for *widows' veils*, &c.? if so, 'twas a *deep, good thought*."

Ver. 26.

'—————That wear
The royal honours, and increase the year.'

"What's meant by *increasing the year*? Did the *gods* or *goddesses* add more *months*, or *days*, or *hours*, to it? Or how can *arvu tueri* signify to *wear rural honours*? Is this to *translate*, or *abuse* an *author*? The next *couplet* is borrowed from *Ogylby*, I suppose, because *less to the purpose* than ordinary."

Ver. 33.

'The patron of the world, and Rome's peculiar guard.'

"Idle, and none of *Virgil's*, no more than the sense of the *precedent couplet*; so again, he *interpolates* *Virgil* with that and the *round circle of the year* to *guide powerful of blessings*, which thou *strew'st* around; a ridiculous *Latinism*, and an *impertinent addition*; indeed the whole *period* is but one piece of *absurdity*

and nonsense, as those who lay it with the *original* must find."

Ver. 42, 43.

' And Neptune shall resign the fasces of the sea.'

" Was he *consul* or *dictator* there?"

' And watery virgins for thy bed shall strive.'

" Both absurd *interpolations*."

Ver. 47, 48.

' Where in the void of Heaven a place is free.

Ah happy, D——n were that place for thee!'

" But where is *that void*? Or, what does our *translator* mean by it? He knows what *Ovid* says *God* did to prevent such a *void* in Heaven; perhaps this was then forgotten: but *Virgil* talks more sensibly."

Ver. 49.

' The scorpion ready to receive thy laws.'

" No, he would not then have *gotten out of his way* so fast."

Ver. 56.

' Though Proserpine affects her silent seat.'

" What made *her* then so *angry* with *Ascalaphus*, for preventing her return? She was now used to *Patience* under the *determinations of Fate*, rather than *fond* of her *residence*."

Ver. 61, 62, 63.

' Pity the poet's and the ploughman's cares,

Interest thy greatness in our mean affairs,

And use thyself betimes to hear our prayers.'

" Which is such a wretched *perversion* of *Virgil's noble thought* as *Vicars* would have blushed at; but *Mr. Ogylby* makes us some amends, by his better lines:"

' O whereso'er thou art, from thence incline,

And grant assistance to my bold design!

Pity, with me, poor husbandmen's affairs,

And now, as if translated, hear our prayers.'

" This is *sense*, and *to the purpose*: the other, poor *mistaken-stuff*."

Such were the strictures of Milbourne, who found few abettors, and of whom it may be reasonably imagined, that many who favoured his design were ashamed of his insolence.

When admiration had subsided, the translation was more coolly examined, and found, like all others, to be sometimes erroneous, and sometimes licentious. Those who could find faults, thought they could avoid them; and Dr. Brady attempted in blank verse a translation of the *Æneid*, which, when dragged into the world, did not live long enough to cry. I have never seen it; but that such a version there is, or has been, perhaps some old catalogue informed me.

With not much better success, Trapp, when his Tragedy and his 'Prelections' had given him reputation, attempted another blank version of the *Æneid*; to which, notwithstanding the slight regard with which it was treated, he had afterwards perseverance enough to add the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*. His book may continue in existence, as long as it is the clandestine refuge of school-boys.

Since the English ear has been accustomed to the melliflence of Pope's numbers, and the diction of poetry has become more splendid, new attempts have been made to translate Virgil; and all his works have been attempted by men better qualified to contend with Dryden. I will not engage myself in an invidious comparison, by opposing one passage to another; a work of which there would be no end, and which might be often offensive without use.

It is not by comparing line with line that the merit of great works is to be estimated, but by their general effects and ultimate result. It is easy to note a weak line, and write one more vigorous in its place; to find a happiness of expression in the original, and transplant it by force into the version: but what is given to the parts may be subducted from the whole,

and the reader may be weary, though the critic may commend. Works of imagination excel by their allurements and delight; by their power of attracting and detaining the attention. That book is good in vain, which the reader throws away. He only is the master, who keeps the mind in pleasing captivity; whose pages are perused with eagerness, and in hope of new pleasure are perused again; and whose conclusion is perceived with an eye of sorrow, such as the traveller casts upon departing day.

By his proportion of this predominance I will consent that Dryden should be tried; of this, which, in opposition to reason, makes Ariosto the darling and the pride of Italy; of this, which, in defiance of criticism, continues Shakspeare the sovereign of the drama.

His last work was his 'Fables,' in which he gave us the first example of a mode of writing which the Italians call *refaccimento*, a renovation of ancient writers, by modernizing their language. Thus the old poem of Boiardo has been new dressed by Domenichi and Berni. The works of Chaucer, upon which this kind of rejuvenescence has been bestowed by Dryden, require little criticism. The tale of the Cock seems hardly worth revival; and the story of Palamon and Arcite, containing an action unsuitable to the times in which it is placed, can hardly be suffered to pass without censure of the hyperbolical commendation which Dryden has given it in the general Preface, and in a poetical Dedication, a piece where his original fondness of remote conceits seems to have revived.

Of the three pieces borrowed from Boccace, Sigismunda may be defended by the celebrity of the story. Theodore and Honoria, though it contains not much moral, yet afforded opportunities of striking description. And Cymon was formerly a tale of such reputation, that at the revival of letters it was translated into Latin by one of the Beroalds.

Whatever subjects employed his pen he was still improving our measures, and embellishing our language.

In this volume are interspersed some short original poems, which, with his prologues, epilogues, and songs, may be comprised in Congreve's remark, that even those, if he had written nothing else, would have entitled him to the praise of excellence in his kind.

One composition must however be distinguished. The ode for St. Cecilia's Day, perhaps the last effort of his poetry, has been always considered as exhibiting the highest flight of fancy, and the exactest nicety of art. This is allowed to stand without a rival. If indeed there is any excellence beyond it, in some other of Dryden's works that excellence must be found. Compared with the ode on Killigrew, it may be pronounced perhaps superior in the whole, but without any single part equal to the first stanza of the other.

It is said to have cost Dryden a fortnight's labour; but it does not want its negligences; some of the lines are without correspondent rhymes; a defect, which I never detected but after an acquaintance of many years, and which the enthusiasm of the writer might hinder him from perceiving.

His last stanza has less emotion than the former; but it is not less elegant in the diction. The conclusion is vicious; the music of Timotheus, which *raised a mortal to the skies*, had only a metaphorical power; that of Cecilia, which *drew an angel down*, had a real effect: the crown therefore could not reasonably be divided.

In a general survey of Dryden's labours, he appears to have a mind very comprehensive by nature, and much enriched with acquired knowledge. His compositions are the effects of a vigorous genius operating upon large materials.

The power that predominated in his intellectual

operations was rather strong reason than quick sensibility. Upon all occasions that were presented, he studied rather than felt, and produced sentiments not such as nature enforces, but meditation supplies. With the simple and elemental passions, as they spring separate in the mind, he seems not much acquainted; and seldom describes them but as they are complicated by the various relations of society, and confused in the tumults and agitations of life.

What he says of Love may contribute to the explanation of his character:

‘ Love various minds does variously inspire :
It stirs in gentle bosoms gentle fire,
Like that of incense on the altar laid ;
But raging flames tempestuous souls invade :
A fire which every windy passion blows,
With pride it mounts, or with revenge it glows.’

Dryden's was not one of the *gentle bosoms*: Love, as it subsists in itself, with no tendency but to the person loved, and wishing only for correspondent kindness; such Love as shuts out all other interest, the Love of the Golden Age, was too soft and subtle to put his faculties in motion. He hardly conceived it but in its turbulent effervescence with some other desires; when it was enflamed by rivalry, or obstructed by difficulties; when it invigorated ambition, or exasperated revenge.

He is therefore, with all his variety of excellence, not often pathetic; and had so little sensibility of the power of effusions purely natural, that he did not esteem them in others. Simplicity gave him no pleasure; and for the first part of his life he looked on Otway with contempt, though at last, indeed very late, he confessed that in his play ‘there was Nature, which is the chief beauty.’

We do not always know our own motives. I am not certain whether it was not rather the difficulty which he found in exhibiting the genuine operations

of the heart, than a servile submission to an injudicious audience, that filled his plays with false magnificence. It was necessary to fix attention; and the mind can be captivated only by recollection, or by curiosity; by reviving natural sentiments, or impressing new appearances of things: sentences were readier at his call than images; he could more easily fill the ear with splendid novelty, than awaken those ideas that slumber in the heart.

The favourite exercise of his mind was ratiocination; and, that argument might not be too soon at an end, he delighted to talk of liberty and necessity, destiny and contingency; these he discusses in the language of the school, with so much profundity, that the terms which he uses are not always understood. It is indeed learning, but learning out of place.

When once he had engaged himself in disputation, thoughts flowed in on either side: he was now no longer at a loss; he had always objections and solutions at command; '*verbaque provisam rem*'—give him matter for his verse, and he finds without difficulty verse for his matter.

In Comedy, for which he professes himself not naturally qualified, the mirth which he excites will perhaps not be found so much to arise from any original humour, or peculiarity of character nicely distinguished and diligently pursued, as from incidents and circumstances, artifices and surprises; from jests of action rather than of sentiment. What he had of humorous or passionate, he seems to have had not from nature, but from other poets; if not always as a plagiarist, at least as an imitator.

Next to argument, his delight was in wild and daring sallies of sentiment, in the irregular and eccentric violence of wit. He delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning, where light and darkness begin to mingle; to approach the precipice of absurdity,

and hover over the abyss of unideal vacancy. This inclination sometimes produced nonsense, which he knew; as,

‘ Move swiftly, Sun, and fly a lover’s pace,
Leave weeks and months behind thee in thy race.

Amamel flies

To guard thee from the demons of the air;
My flaming sword above them to display,
All keen, and ground upon the edge of day.’

And sometimes it issued in absurdities, of which perhaps he was not conscious:

‘ Then we upon our orb’s last verge shall go,
And see the ocean leaning on the sky;
From thence our rolling neighbours we shall know,
And on the lunar world securely pry.’

These lines have no meaning; but may we not say, in imitation of Cowley on another book,

‘Tis so like *sense* ’twill serve the turn as well?

This endeavour after the grand and the new produced many sentiments either great or bulky, and many images either just or splendid:

‘ I am as free as Nature first made man,
Ere the base laws of servitude began,
When wild in woods the noble savage ran.

‘ —’Tis but because the Living death ne’er knew,
They fear to prove it as a thing that’s new:
Let me the’ experiment before you try,
I’ll show you first how easy ’tis to die.

‘ —There with a forest of their darts he strove,
And stood like Capaneus defying Jove,
With his broad sword the boldest beating down,
While Fate grew pale lest he should win the town,
And turn’d the iron leaves of his dark book
To make new dooms, or mend what it mistook.

‘ —I beg no pity for this mouldering clay;
For if you give it burial, there it takes
Possession of your earth:
If burn’d, and scatter’d in the air, the winds
That strew my dust diffuse my royalty,
And spread me o’er your clime; for where one atom
Of mine shall light, know there Sebastian reigns.’

Of these quotations the two first may be allowed to be great, the two latter only tumid.

Of such selection there is no end. I will add only a few more passages; of which the first, though it may not perhaps be quite clear in prose, is not too obscure for poetry, as the meaning that it has is noble:

‘ No, there is a necessity in Fate,
Why still the brave bold man is fortunate ;
He keeps his object ever full in sight ;
And that assurance holds him firm and right ;
True, ’tis a narrow way that leads to bliss,
But right before there is no precipice ;
Fear makes men look aside, and so their footing miss.’

Of the images which the two following citations afford, the first is elegant, the second magnificent; whether either be just, let the reader judge:

‘ What precious drops are these,
Which silently each other’s track pursue,
Bright as young diamonds in their infant dew ?

‘ ————— Resign your castle——
—Enter, brave Sir ; for, when you speak the word,
The gates shall open of their own accord ;
The genius of the place its Lord shall meet,
And bow its towery forehead at your feet.’

These bursts of extravagance Dryden calls the “Dalilahs” of the Theatre; and owns that many noisy lines of Maximin and Almanzor call out for vengeance upon him: “but I knew,” says he, “that they were bad enough to please, even when I wrote them.” There is surely reason to suspect that he pleased himself as well as his audience; and that these, like the harlots of other men, had his love, though not his approbation.

He had sometimes faults of a less generous and splendid kind. He makes, like almost all other poets, very frequent use of mythology, and sometimes connects religion and fable too closely without distinction.

He descends to display his knowledge with pedantic ostentation ; as when, in translating Virgil, he says, "tack to the larboard"—and "veer starboard;" and talks in another work, of "virtue spooning before the wind."—His vanity now and then betrays his ignorance :

'They Nature's king through Nature's optics view'd ;
Reversed, they view'd him lessen'd to their eyes.'

He had heard of reversing a telescope, and unluckily reverses the object.

He is sometimes unexpectedly mean. When he describes the Supreme Being as moved by prayer to stop the Fire of London, what is his expression ?

'A hollow crystal pyramid he takes,
In firmamental waters dipp'd above,
Of this a broad *extinguisher* he makes,
And *hoods* the flames that to their quarry strove.'

When he describes the Last Day, and the decisive tribunal, he intermingles this image :

'When rattling bones together fly,
From the four quarters of the sky.'

It was indeed never in his power to resist the temptation of a jest. In his *Elegy on Cromwell* :

'No sooner was the Frenchman's cause embraced,
Than the *light Monsieur* the *grave Don* outweigh'd ;
His fortune turn'd the scale——'

He had a vanity, unworthy of his abilities, to show, as may be suspected, the rank of the company with whom he lived, by the use of French words, which had then crept into conversation : such as *fraicheur* for *coolness*, *fougue* for *turbulence*, and a few more, none of which the language has incorporated or retained. They continue only where they stood first, perpetual warnings to future innovators.

These are his faults of affectation ; his faults of negligence are beyond recital. Such is the unevenness of his compositions, that ten lines are seldom

found together without something of which the reader is ashamed. Dryden was no rigid judge of his own pages; he seldom struggled after supreme excellence, but snatched in haste what was within his reach; and when he could content others, was himself contented. He did not keep present to his mind an idea of pure perfection; nor compare his works, such as they were, with what they might be made. He knew to whom he should be opposed. He had more music than Waller, more vigour than Denham, and more nature than Cowley; and from his contemporaries he was in no danger. Standing therefore in the highest place, he had no care to rise by contending with himself; but, while there was no name above his own, was willing to enjoy fame on the easiest terms.

He was no lover of labour. What he thought sufficient, he did not stop to make better; and allowed himself to leave many parts unfinished, in confidence that the good lines would overbalance the bad. What he had once written, he dismissed from his thoughts: and I believe there is no example to be found of any correction or improvement made by him after publication. The hastiness of his productions might be the effect of necessity; but his subsequent neglect could hardly have any other cause than impatience of study.

What can be said of his versification will be little more than a dilatation of the praise given it by Pope:

‘Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join
The varying verse, the full-resounding line,
The long majestic march, and energy divine.’

Some improvements had been already made in English numbers; but the full force of our language was not yet felt; the verse that was smooth was commonly feeble. If Cowley had sometimes a finished line, he had it by chance. Dryden knew how to choose the flowing and the sonorous words; to vary the

pauses, and adjust the accents; to diversify the cadence, and yet preserve the smoothness of his metre.

Of Triplets and Alexandrines, though he did not introduce the use, he established it. The Triplet has long subsisted among us. Dryden seems not to have traced it higher than to Chapman's Homer; but it is to be found in Phaer's Virgil, written in the reign of Mary; and in Hall's Satires, published five years before the death of Elizabeth.

The Alexandrine was, I believe, first used by Spenser, for the sake of closing his stanza with a fuller sound. We had a longer measure of fourteen syllables, into which the Æneid was translated by Phaer, and other works of the ancients by other writers: of which Chapman's Iliad was, I believe, the last.

The two first lines of Phaer's third Æneid will exemplify this measure:

'When Asia's state was overthrown, and Priam's kingdom
stout,

All guiltless, by the power of gods above was rooted out.'

As these lines had their break, or *cæsura*, always at the eighth syllable, it was thought, in time, commodious to divide them: and quatrains of lines, alternately, consisting of eight and six syllables, make the most soft and pleasing of our lyric measures; as,

Relentless Time, destroying power,
Which stone and brass obey,
Who givest to every flying hour
To work some new decay.'

In the Alexandrine, when its power was once felt, some poems, as Drayton's 'Polyolbion,' were wholly written; and sometimes the measures of twelve and fourteen syllables were interchanged with one another. Cowley was the first that inserted the Alexandrine at pleasure among the heroic lines of ten syllables, and from him Dryden professes to have adopted it.

The Triplet and Alexandrine are not universally approved. Swift always censured them, and wrote some lines to ridicule them. In examining their propriety, it is to be considered that the essence of verse is regularity, and its ornament is variety. To write verse, is to dispose syllables and sounds harmonically by some known and settled rule; a rule, however, lax enough to substitute similitude for identity, to admit change without breach of order, and to relieve the ear without disappointing it. Thus a Latin hexameter is formed from dactyls and spondees differently combined; the English heroic admits of acute or grave syllables variously disposed. The Latin never deviates into seven feet, or exceeds the number of seventeen syllables; but the English Alexandrine breaks the lawful bounds, and surprises the reader with two syllables more than he expected.

The effect of the Triplet is the same: the ear has been accustomed to expect a new rhyme in every couplet; but is on a sudden surprised with three rhymes together, to which the reader could not accommodate his voice, did he not obtain notice of the change from the braces of the margins. Surely there is something unskilful in the necessity of such mechanical direction.

Considering the metrical art simply as a science, and consequently excluding all casualty, we must allow that Triplets and Alexandrines, inserted by caprice, are interruptions of that constancy to which science aspires. And though the variety which they produce may very justly be desired, yet, to make poetry exact, there ought to be some stated mode of admitting them.

But till some such regulation can be formed, I wish them still to be retained in their present state. They are sometimes convenient to the poet. Fenton was of opinion, that Dryden was too liberal, and Pope too sparing, in their use.

The rhymes of Dryden are commonly just, and he valued himself for his readiness in finding them; but he is sometimes open to objection.

It is the common practice of our poets to end the second line with a weak or grave syllable:

‘ Together o’er the Alps methinks we fly,
Fill’d with ideas of fair *Italy*.’

Dryden sometimes puts the weak rhyme in the first:

‘ Laugh, all the powers that favour *tyranny*,
And all the standing army of the sky.’

Sometimes he concludes a period or paragraph with the first line of a couplet, which, though the French seem to do it without irregularity, always displeases in English poetry.

The Alexandrine, though much his favourite, is not always very diligently fabricated by him. It invariably requires a break at the sixth syllable; a rule which the modern French poets never violate, but which Dryden sometimes neglected:

‘ And with paternal thunder vindicates his throne.’

Of Dryden’s works it was said by Pope, that “ he could select from them better specimens of every mode of poetry than any other English writer could supply.” Perhaps no nation ever produced a writer that enriched his language with such variety of models. To him we owe the improvement, perhaps the completion of our metre, the refinement of our language, and much of the correctness of our sentiments. By him we were taught ‘*sapere et fari*,’ to think naturally and express forcibly. Though Davies has reasoned in rhyme before him, it may be perhaps maintained that he was the first who joined argument with poetry. He showed us the true bounds of a translator’s liberty. What was said of Rome, adorned by Augustus, may be applied by an

easy metaphor to English poetry, embellished by Dryden, '*lateritiam invenit, marmoream reliquit*.' He found it brick, and he left it marble.

The invocation before the *Georgics* is here inserted from Mr. Milbourne's version, that, according to his own proposal, his verses may be compared with those which he censures.

'What makes the richest *tith*, beneath what signs
To *plough*, and when to match your *elms* and *vines* ;
What care with *flocks*, and what with *herds* agrees,
And all the management of frugal *bees* ;
I sing, *Mæcenas* ! Ye immensely clear,
Vast orbs of light, which guide the rolling year,
Bacchus, and mother *Ceres*, if by you
We fattening corn for hungry *mast* pursue,
If, taught by you, we first the *cluster* press'd,
And *thin cold streams* with *sprightly juice* refresh'd ;
Ye *fauns*, the present *numens* of the field,
Wood nymphs and *fauns*, your kind assistance yield ;
Your gifts I sing : and thou, at whose fear'd stroke
From rending earth the fiery *courser* broke,
Great *Neptune*, O assist my artful song !
And thou to whom the woods and groves belong,
Whose snowy heifers on her flowery plains
In mighty herds the *Cæan Isle* maintains !
Pan, happy shepherd, if thy cares divine,
E'er to improve thy *Manalus* incline,
Leave thy *Lycæan wood* and *native grove*,
And with thy lucky smiles our work approve ;
Be *Pallas* too, sweet oil's inventor, kind ;
And he who first the crooked *plough* design'd,
Sylvanus, god of all the woods, appear,
Whose hands a new-drawn tender *cypress* bear !
Ye *gods* and *goddesses*, whoe'er with love
Would guard our pastures and our fields improve ;
You, who new plants from unknown lands supply,
And with condensing clouds obscure the sky,
And drop them softly thence in fruitful showers,
Assist my enterprize, ye gentle powers !

And thou, great *Cæsar* ! though we know not yet
Among what gods thou 'lt fix thy lofty seat ;
Whether thou 'lt be the kind *tutelâr god*
Of thy own *Rome*, or with thy awful nod

Guide the vast world, while thy great hand shall bear
 The fruits and seasons of the turning year,
 And thy bright brows thy mother's myrtles wear;
 Whether thou 'lt all the boundless ocean away,
 And seamen only to thyself shall pray;
Thule, the fairest island, kneel to thee,
 And, that thou may'st her son by marriage be,
Tethys will for the happy purchase yield
 To make a *dowry* of her watery field:
 Whether thou 'lt add to Heaven a *brighter sign*,
 And o'er the *summer months* serenely shine;
 Where between *Cancer* and *Erigone*,
 There yet remains a spacious *room* for thee;
 Where the hot *Scorpion* too his arm declines,
 And more to thee than half his *arch* resigns;
 Whate'er thou 'lt be; for sure the realms below
 No just pretence to thy command can show:
 No such ambition sways thy vast desires,
 Though *Greece* her own *Elysian Fields* admires.
 And now, at last, contented *Proserpine*
 Can all her mother's earnest prayers decline.
 Whate'er thou 'lt be, O guide our gentle course;
 And with thy smiles our bold attempts enforce;
 With me the unknowing *rustics'* wants relieve,
 And, though on earth, our sacred vows receive!

Mr. DRYDEN, having received from Rymer his
 'Remarks on the Tragedies of the last Age,' wrote
 observations on the blank leaves; which, having
 been in the possession of Mr. Garrick, are by his
 favour communicated to the public, that no particle
 of Dryden be lost.

"That we may less wonder why pity and terror
 are not now the only springs on which our tragedies
 move, and that Shakspeare may be more excused,
 Rapin confesses that the French tragedies now all
 run on the *tendre*; and gives the reason, because
 love is the passion which most predominates in our
 souls, and that therefore the passions represented
 become insipid, unless they are conformable to the
 thoughts of the audience. But it is to be concluded,
 that this passion works not now amongst the French

so strongly as the other two did amongst the ancients. Amongst us, who have a stronger genius for writing, the operations from the writing are much stronger; for the raising of Shakspeare's passions is more from the excellency of the words and thoughts, than the justness of the occasion; and, if he has been able to pick single occasions, he has never founded the whole reasonably: yet, by the genius of poetry in writing, he has succeeded.

"Rapin attributes more to the *dictio*, that is, to the words and discourse of a tragedy, than Aristotle has done, who places them in the last rank of beauties; perhaps, only last in order, because they are the last product of the design, of the disposition or connexion of its parts; of the characters, of the manners of those characters, and of the thoughts proceeding from those manners. Rapin's words are remarkable: 'Tis not the admirable intrigue, the surprising events, and extraordinary incidents, that make the beauty of a tragedy: 'tis the discourses, when they are natural and passionate: so are Shakspeare's.'

"The parts of a poem, tragic or heroic, are,

"1. The fable itself.

"2. The order or manner of its contrivance, in relation of the parts to the whole.

"3. The manners, or decency, of the characters, in speaking or acting what is proper for them, and proper to be shown by the poet.

"4. The thoughts which express the manners.

"5. The words which express those thoughts.

"In the last of these Homer excels Virgil; Virgil all the other ancient poets; and Shakspeare all modern poets.

"For the second of these, the order: the meaning is, that a fable ought to have a beginning, middle, and an end, all just and natural; so that part, *e. g.* which is the middle, could not naturally be the

beginning or end, and so of the rest: all depend on one another, like the links of a curious chain. If terror and pity are only to be raised, certainly this author follows Aristotle's rules, and Sophocles' and Euripides' example; but joy may be raised too, and that doubly, either by seeing a wicked man punished, or a good man at last fortunate; or perhaps indignation, to see wickedness prosperous, and goodness depressed: both these may be profitable to the end of a tragedy, reformation of manners; but the last improperly, only as it begets pity in the audience; though Aristotle, I confess, places tragedies of this kind in the second form.

"He who undertakes to answer this excellent critique of Mr. Rymer, in behalf of our English poets against the Greek, ought to do it in this manner: either by yielding to him the greatest part of what he contends for, which consists in this, that the *μυθος*, i. e. the design and conduct of it, is more conducing in the Greeks to those ends of tragedy, which Aristotle and he propose, namely, to cause terror and pity; yet the granting this does not set the Greeks above the English poets.

"But the answerer ought to prove two things: first, that the fable is not the greatest masterpiece of a tragedy, though it be the foundation of it.

"Secondly, that other ends as suitable to the nature of tragedy may be found in the English, which were not in the Greek.

"Aristotle places the fable first; not *quoad dignitatem*, sed *quoad fundamentum*: for a fable, never so movingly contrived to those ends of his, pity and terror, will operate nothing on our affections, except the characters, manners, thoughts, and words, are suitable.

"So that it remains for Mr. Rymer to prove, that in all those, or the greatest part of them, we are inferior to Sophocles and Euripides; and this he has

offered at, in some measure; but, I think, a little partially to the ancients.

“For the fable itself, ’tis in the English more adorned with episodes, and larger than in the Greek poets; consequently more diverting. For, if the action be but one, and that plain, without any counterturn of design or episode, *i. e.* underplot, how can it be so pleasing as the English, which have both underplot and a turned design, which keeps the audience in expectation of the catastrophe? whereas in the Greek poets we see through the whole design at first.

“For the characters, they are neither so many nor so various in Sophocles and Euripides, as in Shakespeare and Fletcher; only they are more adapted to those ends of tragedy which Aristotle commends to us, pity and terror.

“The manners flow from the characters, and consequently must partake of their advantages and disadvantages.

“The thoughts and words, which are the fourth and fifth beauties of tragedy, are certainly more noble and more poetical in the English than in the Greek, which must be proved by comparing them somewhat more equitably than Mr. Rymer has done.

“After all, we need not yield that the English way is less conducing to move pity and terror, because they often show virtue oppressed, and vice punished; where they do not both, or either, they are not to be defended.

“And if we should grant that the Greeks performed this better, perhaps it may admit of dispute, whether pity and terror are either the prime, or at least the only ends of tragedy.

“’Tis not enough that Aristotle had said so; for, Aristotle drew his models of tragedy from Sophocles and Euripides; and if he had seen ours, might have changed his mind. And chiefly we have to say,

(what I hinted on pity and terror, in the last paragraph save one), that the punishment of vice and reward of virtue are the most adequate ends of tragedy, because most conducing to good example of life. Now, pity is not so easily raised for a criminal (and the ancient tragedy always represents its chief person such) as it is for an innocent man; and the suffering of innocence and punishment of the offender is of the nature of English tragedy: contrarily, in the Greek, innocence is unhappy often, and the offender escapes. Then we are not touched with the sufferings of any sort of men so much as of lovers; and this was almost unknown to the ancients: so that they neither administered poetical justice, of which Mr. Rymer boasts, so well as we; neither knew they the best common-place of pity, which is love.

“ He therefore unjustly blames us for not building on what the ancients left us; for it seems, upon consideration of the premises, that we have wholly finished what they began.

“ My judgment on this piece is this; that it is extremely learned, but that the author of it is better read in the Greek than in the English poets; that all writers ought to study this critique, as the best account I have ever seen of the ancients; that the model of tragedy, he has here given, is excellent, and extremely correct; but that it is not the only model of all tragedy, because it is too much circumscribed in plot, characters, &c. and, lastly, that we may be taught here justly to admire and imitate the ancients, without giving them the preference with this author, in prejudice to our own country.

“ Want of method in this excellent treatise makes the thoughts of the author sometimes obscure.

“ His meaning, that pity and terror are to be moved, is, that they are to be moved as the means conducing to the ends of tragedy, which are pleasure and instruction.

“And these two ends may be thus distinguished. The chief end of the poet is to please; for his immediate reputation depends on it.

“The great end of the poem is to instruct, which is performed by making pleasure the vehicle of that instruction; for, poesy is an art, and all arts are made to profit.—*Rapin*.

“The pity which the poet is to labour for, is for the criminal, not for those or him whom he has murdered, or who have been the occasion of the tragedy. The terror is likewise in the punishment of the same criminal; who, if he be represented too great an offender, will not be pitied: if altogether innocent, his punishment will be unjust.

“Another obscurity is, where he says Sophocles perfected tragedy by introducing the third actor: that is, he meant three kinds of action; one company singing, or speaking; another playing on the music; a third dancing.

“To make a true judgment in this competition betwixt the Greek poets and the English, in tragedy:

“Consider, first, how Aristotle has defined a tragedy. Secondly, what he assigns the end of it to be. Thirdly, what he thinks the beauties of it. Fourthly, the means to attain the end proposed.

“Compare the Greek and English tragic poets justly, and without partiality, according to those rules.

“Then, secondly, consider whether Aristotle has made a just definition of tragedy; of its parts, of its ends, and of its beauties; and whether he, having not seen any others but those of Sophocles, Euripides, &c. had or truly could determine what all the excellencies of tragedy are, and wherein they consist.

“Next, show in what ancient tragedy was deficient: for example, in the narrowness of its plots, and fewness of persons; and try whether that be not a fault in the Greek poets; and whether their

excellency was so great, when the variety was visibly so little; or whether what they did was not very easy to do.

“Then make a judgment on what the English have added to their beauties: as, for example, not only more plot, but also new passions; as, namely, that of love, scarcely touched on by the ancients, except in this one example of Phædra, cited by Mr. Rymer; and in that how short they were of Fletcher!

“Prove also that love, being an heroic passion, is fit for tragedy, which cannot be denied, because of the example alleged of Phædra; and how far Shakspeare has outdone them in friendship, &c.

“To return to the beginning of this inquiry; consider if pity and terror be enough for tragedy to move: and I believe, upon a true definition of tragedy, it will be found that its work extends farther, and that it is to reform manners, by a delightful representation of human life in great persons, by way of dialogue. If this be true, then not only pity and terror are to be moved, as the only means to bring us to virtue, but generally love to virtue, and hatred to vice; by showing the rewards of one, and punishments of the other; at least, by rendering virtue always amiable, though it be shown unfortunate; and vice detestable, though it be shown triumphant.

“If, then, the encouragement of virtue and discouragement of vice be the proper ends of poetry in tragedy, pity and terror, though good means, are not the only. For all the passions, in their turns, are to be set in a ferment; as joy, anger, love, fear, are to be used as the poet’s common-places; and a general concernment for the principal actors is to be raised, by making them appear such in their characters, their words, and actions, as will interest the audience in their fortunes.

“And if, after all, in a larger sense, pity compre-

hends this concernment for the good, and terror includes detestation for the bad, then let us consider whether the English have not answered this end of tragedy as well as the ancients, or perhaps better.

"And here Mr. Rymer's objections against these plays are to be impartially weighed, that we may see whether they are of weight enough to turn the balance against our countrymen.

"Tis evident those plays, which he arraigns, have moved both those passions in a high degree upon the stage.

"To give the glory of this away from the poet, and to place it upon the actors, seems unjust.

"One reason is, because whatever actors they have found, the event has been the same; that is, the same passions have been always moved; which shows that there is something of force and merit in the plays themselves, conducing to the design of raising these two passions: and suppose them ever to have been excellently acted, yet action only adds grace, vigour, and more life, upon the stage; but cannot give it wholly where it is not first. But, secondly, I dare appeal to those who have never seen them acted, if they have not found these two passions moved within them: and if the general voice will carry it, Mr. Rymer's prejudice will take off his single testimony.

"This, being matter of fact, is reasonably to be established by this appeal; as, if one man says it is night, when the rest of the world conclude it to be day, there needs no farther argument against him, that it is so.

"If he urge, that the general taste is depraved, his arguments to prove this can at best but evince that our poets took not the best way to raise those passions: but experience proves against him, that those means, which they have used, have been successful, and have produced them.

“And one reason of that success is, in my opinion, this; that Shakspeare and Fletcher have written to the genius of the age and nation in which they lived; for though nature, as he objects, is the same in all places, and reason too the same; yet the climate, the age, the disposition of the people, to whom a poet writes, may be so different, that what pleased the Greeks would not satisfy an English audience.

“And if they proceed upon a foundation of truer reason to please the Athenians, than Shakspeare and Fletcher to please the English, it only shows that the Athenians were a more judicious people; but the poet’s business is certainly to please the audience.

“Whether our English audience have been pleased hitherto with acorns, as he calls it, or with bread, is the next question; that is, whether the means which Shakspeare and Fletcher have used, in their plays, to raise those passions before named, be better applied to the ends by the Greek poets than by them. And perhaps we shall not grant him this wholly: let it be yielded that a writer is not to run down with the stream, or to please the people by their usual methods, but rather to reform their judgments, it still remains to prove that our theatre needs this total reformation.

“The faults, which he has found in their design are rather wittily aggravated, in many places, than reasonably urged; and as much may be returned on the Greeks by one who were as witty as himself.

“They destroy not, if they are granted, the foundation of the fabric; only take away from the beauty of the symmetry; for example, the faults in the character of the King, in King and No-king, are not, as he calls them, such as render him detestable, but only imperfections which accompany human nature, and are for the most part excused by the violence of his love; so that they destroy not our pity or concernment for him: this answer may be applied to most of his objections of that kind.

“ And Rollo committing many murders, when he is answerable but for one, is too severely arraigned by him; for, it adds to our horror and detestation of the criminal; and poetic justice is not neglected neither; for we stab him in our minds for every offence which he commits; and the point, which the poet is to gain on the audience, is not so much in the death of an offender as the raising an horror of his crimes.

“ That the criminal should neither be wholly guilty, nor wholly innocent, but so participating of both as to move both pity and terror, is certainly a good rule, but not perpetually to be observed; for, that were to make all tragedies too much alike; which objection he foresaw, but has not fully answered.

“ To conclude, therefore; if the plays of the ancients are more correctly plotted, ours are more beautifully written. And, if we can raise passions as high on worse foundations, it shows our genius in tragedy is greater; for in all other parts of it the English have manifestly excelled them.”

THE original of the following letter is preserved in the Library at Lambeth, and was kindly imparted to the public by the reverend Dr. Vyse.

Copy of an original Letter from John Dryden, Esq. to his sons in Italy, from a MS. in the Lambeth Library, marked N^o 933, p. 56.

(*Superscribed*)

“ Al illustrissimo Sig^a
Carlo Dryden Camariere
d'Honore A.S.S.

“ In Roma.

“ Franca per Mantoua.

" Sept. the 3d, our style.

" Dear Sons,

" Being now at Sir William Bowyer's in the country, I cannot write at large, because I find myself somewhat indisposed with a cold, and am thick of hearing, rather worse than I was in town. I am glad to find, by your letter of July 26th, your style, that you are both in health; but wonder you should think me so negligent as to forget to give you an account of the ship in which your parcel is to come. I have written to you two or three letters concerning it, which I have sent by safe hands, as I told you, and doubt not but you have them before this can arrive to you. Being out of town, I have forgotten the ship's name, which your mother will inquire, and put it into her letter, which is joined with mine. But the master's name I remember: he is called Mr. Ralph Thorp; the ship is bound to Leghorn, consigned to Mr. Peter and Mr. Thomas Ball, merchants. I am of your opinion, that by Tonson's means almost all our letters have miscarried for this last year. But, however, he has missed of his design in the Dedication, though he had prepared the book for it; for, in every figure of Æneas, he has caused him to be drawn like King William, with a hooked nose. After my return to town, I intend to alter a play of Sir Robert Howard's, written long since, and lately put into my hands; 'tis called 'The Conquest of China by the Tartars.' It will cost me six weeks study, with the probable benefit of an hundred pounds. In the mean time I am writing a song for St. Cecilia's Feast, who, you know, is the patroness of music. This is troublesome, and no way beneficial; but I could not deny the Stewards of the Feast, who came in a body to me to desire that kindness, one of them being Mr. Bridgeman, whose parents are your mother's friends. I hope to send you thirty guineas between Michaelmas and Christ-

mas, of which I will give you an account when I come to town. I remember the counsel you give me in your letter: but dissembling, though lawful in some cases, is not my talent; yet, for your sake, I will struggle with the plain openness of my nature, and keep in my just resentments against that degenerate order. In the mean time, I flatter not myself with any manner of hopes, but do my duty, and suffer for God's sake; being assured, before hand, never to be rewarded, though the times should alter. Towards the latter end of this month, September, Charles will begin to recover his perfect health, according to his Nativity, which, casting it myself, I am sure is true; and all things hitherto have happened accordingly to the very time that I predicted them: I hope at the same time to recover more health, according to my age. Remember me to poor Harry, whose prayers I earnestly desire. My Virgil succeeds in the world beyond its desert, or my expectation. You know the profits might have been more; but neither my conscience nor my honour would suffer me to take them: but I never can repent of my constancy, since I am thoroughly persuaded of the justice of the cause for which I suffer. It has pleased God to raise up many friends to me amongst my enemies, though they who ought to have been my friends are negligent of me. I am called to dinner, and cannot go on with this letter, which I desire you to excuse; and am

“ your most affectionate father,

“ JOHN DRYDEN.”

ENCOMIUMS ON DRYDEN.

ON

MR. DRYDEN'S RELIGIO LAICI.

BY THE EARL OF ROSCOMMON.

BE gone, you slaves, you idle vermin, go,
Fly from the scourges, and your master know ;
Let free, impartial men, from Dryden learn
Mysterious secrets of a high concern,
And weighty truths ; solid convincing sense,
Explain'd by unaffected eloquence.
What can you (reverend Levi) here take ill ?
Men still had faults, and men will have them still ;
He that hath none, and lives as angels do,
Must be an angel ; but what's that to you ?

While mighty Lewis finds the Pope too great,
And dreads the yoke of his imposing seat,
Our sects a more tyrannic power assume,
And would for scorpions change the rods of Rome ;
That church detain'd the legacy divine ;
Fanatics cast the pearls of heaven to swine :
What then have thinking honest men to do,
But choose a mean between the' usurping two ?

Nor can the' Egyptian patriarch blame thy Muse,
Which for his firmness does his heat excuse ;

Whatever councils have approved his creed,
The preface, sure, was his own act and deed.
Our church will have that preface read you'll say:
'Tis true; but so she will the' Apocrypha;
And such as can believe them, freely may.

But did that God (so little understood)
Whose darling attribute is being good,
From the dark womb of the rude chaos bring
Such various creatures, and make man their king:
Yet leave his favourite man, his chiefest care,
More wretched than the vilest insects are?

O! how much happier and more safe are they,
If helpless millions must be doom'd a prey
To yelling furies, and for ever burn
In that sad place from whence is no return,
For unbelief in one they never knew,
Or for not doing what they could not do!
The very fiends know for what crimes they fell,
And so do all their followers that rebel:
If then a blind, well-meaning, Indian stray,
Shall the great gulf be show'd him for the way?

For better ends our kind Redeemer died,
Or the fallen angels' rooms will be but ill supplied,

That Christ, who, at the great deciding day,
(For he declares what he resolves to say)
Will damn the goats for their ill-natured faults,
And save the sheep for actions, not for thoughts,
Hath too much mercy to send men to hell
For humble charity, and hoping well.

To what stupidity are zealots grown,
Whose inhumanity, profusely shown
In damning crowds of souls, may damn their own;
I'll err at least on the securer side,
A convert free from malice and from pride.

FROM ADDISON'S ACCOUNT

OF THE ENGLISH POETS.

BUT see where artful Dryden next appears,
 Grown old in rhyme, but charming even in years.
 Great Dryden next! whose tuneful Muse affords
 The sweetest numbers, and the fittest words.
 Whether in comic sounds or tragic airs
 She forms her voice, she moves our smiles and tears.
 If satire or heroic strains she writes,
 Her hero pleases, and her satire bites.
 From her no harsh unartful numbers fall,
 She wears all dresses, and she charms in all:
 How might we fear our English poetry,
 That long has flourish'd, should decay in thee;
 Did not the Muses' other hope appear,
 Harmonious Congreve, and forbid our fear!
 Congreve! whose fancy's unexhausted store
 Has given already much, and promised more.
 Congreve shall still preserve thy fame alive,
 And Dryden's Muse shall in his friend survive.

 ON

ALEXANDER'S FEAST:

OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC. AN ODE.

From Pope's Essay on Criticism.

HEAR how Timotheus' varied lays surprise,
 And bid alternate passions fall and rise!
 While, at each change, the son of Libyan Jove
 Now burns with glory, and then melts with love:

Now his fierce eyes with sparkling fury glow,
Now sighs steal out, and tears begin to flow.
Persians and Greeks like turns of nature found,
And the world's victor stood subdued by sound,
The power of music all our hearts allow,
And what Timotheus was, is Dryden now.

CHARACTER OF DRYDEN.

FROM GRAY'S PROGRESS OF POESY.

BEHOLD, where Dryden's less presumptuous car,
Wide o'er the fields of glory, bear
Two coursers of etherial race,
With necks in thunder clothed, and long-resound-
Hark, his hands the lyre explore! [ing pace.
Bright-eyed Fancy hovering o'er,
Scatters from her pictured urn,
Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn,
But, ah! 'tis heard no more—

Oh! lyre divine, what daring spirit
Wakes thee now! though he inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
That the Theban eagle bear,
Sailing with supreme dominion
Through the azure deep of air:
Yet oft before his infant-eyes would run
Such forms, as glitter in the Muse's ray
With orient hues, unborrow'd of the sun:
Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way
Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,
Beneath the good how far—but far above the great.



POEMS
OF
JOHN DRYDEN.

HEROIC STANZAS
ON
THE DEATH OF OLIVER CROMWELL.

WRITTEN AFTER HIS FUNERAL.

1658.

AND now 'tis time : for their officious haste,
Who would before have borne him to the sky,
Like eager Romans, ere all rites were past,
Did let too soon the sacred eagle fly.

Though our best notes are treason to his fame,
Join'd with the loud applause of public voice ;
Since Heaven, what praise we offer to his name,
Hath render'd too authentic by its choice.

Though in his praise no arts can liberal be,
Since they, whose Muses have the highest flown,
Add not to their immortal memory,
But do an act of friendship to their own :

Yet 'tis our duty, and our interest too,
Such monuments as we can build to raise;
Lest all the world prevent what we should do,
And claim a title in him by their praise.

How shall I then begin, or where conclude,
To draw a fame so truly circular?
For in a round what order can be show'd,
Where all the parts so equal perfect are?

His grandeur he derived from Heaven alone;
For he was great ere Fortune made him so:
And wars, like mists that rise against the sun,
Made him but greater seem, not greater grow.

No borrow'd bays his temples did adorn,
But to our crown he did fresh jewels bring;
Nor was his virtue poison'd, soon as born,
With the too early thoughts of being king.

Fortune, that easy mistress to the young,
But to her ancient servants coy and hard,
Him at that age her favourites rank'd among,
When she her best-loved Pompey did discard.

He private mark'd the fault of others' sway,
And set as sea-marks for himself to shun;
Not like rash monarchs, who their youth betray
By acts their age too late would wish undone.

And yet dominion was not his design;
We owe that blessing not to him, but Heaven,
Which to fair acts unsought rewards did join,
Rewards that less to him than us were given.

Our former chiefs, like sticklers of the war,
First sought to inflame the parties, then to poise;
The quarrel loved, but did the cause abhor,
And did not strike to hurt, but make a noise.

War, our consumption, was their gainful trade:
We inward bled whilst they prolong'd our pain;
He fought to end our fighting, and essay'd
To staunch the blood by breathing of the vein.

Swift and resistless through the land he pass'd,
Like that bold Greek who did the East subdue;
And made to battles such heroic haste,
As if on wings of victory he flew.

He fought secure of fortune as of fame:
Still by new maps the island might be shown
Of conquests, which he strew'd where'er he came,
Thick as the Galaxy with stars is sown.

His palms, though under weights they did not
stand,
Still thrived; no winter could his laurels fade;
Heaven in his portrait show'd a workman's hand,
And drew it perfect, yet without a shade.

Peace was the prize of all his toil and care,
Which War had banish'd, and did now restore:
Bologna's walls thus mounted in the air,
To seat themselves more surely than before.

Her safety rescued Ireland to him owes;
And treacherous Scotland, to no interest true,
Yet bless'd that fate which did his arms dispose
Her land to civilize, as to subdue.

Nor was he like those stars which only shine
When to pale mariners they storms portend ;
He had his calmer influence, and his mien
Did love and majesty together blend.

'Tis true his countenance did imprint an awe,
And naturally all souls to his did bow,
As wands of divination downward draw, [grow.
And point to beds where sovereign gold doth

When past all offerings to Feretrian Jove,
He Mars deposed, and arms to gowns made yield;
Successful councils did him soon approve
As fit for close intrigues as open field.

To suppliant Holland he vouchsafed a peace,
Our once bold rival of the British main,
Now tamely glad her unjust claim to cease,
And buy our friendship with her idol, gain.

Fame of the' asserted sea through Europe blown
Made France and Spain ambitious of his love;
Each knew that side must conquer he would own;
And for him fiercely, as for empire, strove.

No sooner was the Frenchman's cause embraced,
Than the light Monsieur the grave Don out-
weigh'd ;
His fortune turn'd the scale where'er 'twas cast,
Though Indian mines were in the other laid.

When absent, yet we conquer'd in his right ;
For though some meaner artist's skill were shown
In mingling colours, or in placing light,
Yet still the fair designment was his own.

For from all tempers he could service draw ;
The worth of each with its alloy he knew,
And, as the confident of Nature, saw
How she complexions did divide and brew.

Or he their single virtues did survey,
By intuition in his own large breast,
Where all the rich ideas of them lay,
That were the rule and measure to the rest.

When such heroic virtue Heaven sets out,
The stars, like commons, sullenly obey ;
Because it drains them when it comes about,
And therefore is a tax they seldom pay.

From this high spring our foreign conquests flow,
Which yet more glorious triumphs do portend ;
Since their commencement to his arms they owe,
If springs as high as fountains may ascend.

He made us free-men of the Continent,
Whom Nature did like captives treat before ;
To nobler preys the English lion sent,
And taught him first in Belgian walks to roar.

That old unquestion'd pirate of the land, [heard,
Proud Rome, with dread the fate of Dunkirk
And, trembling, wish'd behind more Alps to stand,
Although an Alexander were her guard.

By his command we boldly cross'd the line,
And bravely fought where southern stars arise ;
We traced the far-fetch'd gold unto the mine,
And that which bribed our fathers made our prize.

136 ON THE DEATH OF CROMWELL.

Such was our Prince ; yet own'd a soul above
The highest acts it could produce to show :
Thus poor mechanic arts in public move,
Whilst the deep secrets beyond practice go.

Nor died he when his ebbing fame went less,
But when fresh laurels courted him to live ;
He seem'd but to prevent some new success,
As if above what triumphs earth could give.

His latest victories still thickest came,
As near the centre motion doth increase ;
Till he, press'd down by his own weighty name,
Did, like the Vestal, under spoils deace.

But first the Ocean as a tribute sent
That giant prince of all her watery herd ;
And the' isle, when her protecting genius went,
Upon his obsequies loud sighs conferr'd.

No civil broils have since his death arose,
But faction now by habit does obey ;
And wars have that respect for his repose,
As winds for halcyons, when they breed at sea.

His ashes in a peaceful urn shall rest,
His name a great example stands, to show
How strangely high endeavours may be bless'd,
Where piety and valour jointly go.

ASTRÆA REDUX.

ON THE HAPPY RESTORATION AND RETURN OF
HIS SACRED MAJESTY CHARLES II.

1660.

Jam redit et virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna.

VIRG.

The last great age, foretold by sacred rhymes,
Renews its finish'd course ; Saturnian times
Roll round again.

Now with a general peace the world was bless'd,
While ours, a world divided from the rest,
A dreadful quiet felt, and (worsè far
Than arms) a sullen interval of war : [skies,
Thus when black clouds draw down the labouring
Ere yet abroad the winged thunder flies,
An horrid stillness first invades the ear,
And in that silence we the tempest fear.
The' ambitious Swede, like restless billows toss'd,
On this hand gaining what in that he lost,
Though in his life he blood and ruin breathed,
To his now guideless kingdom peace bequeath'd :
And Heaven, that seem'd regardless of our fate,
For France and Spain did miracles create ;
Such mortal quarrels to compose in peace,
As Nature bred, and Interest did increase.
We sigh'd to hear the fair Iberian bride
Must grow a lily to the lily's side,

While our cross stars denied us Charles's bed,
Whom our first flames and virgin love did wed.
For his long absence Church and State did groan;
Madness the pulpit, faction seized the throne;
Experienced age in deep despair was lost,
To see the rebel thrive, the loyal cross'd;
Youth, that with joys had unacquainted been,
Envied gray hairs that once good days had seen:
We thought our sires, not with their own content,
Had, ere we came to age, our portion spent.
Nor could our nobles hope their bold attempt
Who ruin'd crowns, would coronets exempt:
For when, by their designing leaders taught
To strike at power, which for themselves they
The vulgar, gull'd into rebellion, arm'd; [sought,
Their blood to action by their prize was warm'd.
The sacred purple then, and scarlet gown,
Like sanguine dye, to elephants was shown.
Thus when the bold Typhœus scaled the sky,
And forced great Jove from his own heaven to fly,
(What king, what crown, from Treason's reach is
If Jove and heaven can violated be!) [free,
The lesser gods, that shared his prosperous state,
All suffer'd in the exiled Thunderer's fate.
The rabble now such freedom did enjoy,
As winds at sea, that use it to destroy:
Blind as the Cyclop, and as wild as he,
They own'd a lawless savage liberty,
Like that our painted ancestors so prized,
Ere Empire's arts their breasts had civilized.
How great were then our Charles's woes, who thus
Was forced to suffer for himself and us!
He, toss'd by Fate, and hurried up and down,
Heir to his father's sorrows with his crown,

Could taste no sweets of youth's desired age,
But found his life too true a pilgrimage.
Unconquer'd yet in that forlorn estate,
His manly courage overcame his fate.
His wounds he took, like Romans, on his breast,
Which by his virtue were with laurels dress'd.
As souls reach Heaven while yet in bodies pent,
So did he live above his banishment.
That sun, which we beheld with cozen'd eyes
Within the water, moved along the skies.
How easy 'tis, when destiny proves kind,
With full-spread sails to run before the wind!
But those that 'gainst stiff gales laveering go,
Must be at once resolved and skilful too.
He would not, like soft Otho, hope prevent,
But stay'd and suffer'd Fortune to repent.
These virtues Galba in a stranger sought,
And Piso to adopted empire brought.
How shall I then my doubtful thoughts express,
That must his sufferings both regret and bless!
For when his early valour Heaven had cross'd,
And all at Worcester but the honour lost,
Forced into exile from his rightful throne,
He made all countries, where he came, his own;
And viewing monarchs' secret arts of sway,
A royal factor for his kingdoms lay.
Thus banish'd David spent abroad his time,
When to be God's anointed was his crime;
And when restored made his proud neighbours rue
Those choice remarks he from his travels drew.
Nor is he only by afflictions shown
To conquer others' realms, but rule his own:
Recovering hardly what he lost before,
His right endears it much, his purchase more.

Inured to suffer ere he came to reign,
No rash procedure will his actions stain :
To business ripen'd by digestive thought,
His future rule is into method brought :
As they, who first proportion understand,
With easy practice reach a master's hand.
Well might the ancient poets then confer
On Night the honour'd name of Counsellor,
Since, struck with rays of prosperous fortune blind,
We light alone in dark afflictions find.
In such adversities to sceptres train'd,
The name of Great his famous grandsire gain'd :
Who yet a king alone in name and right,
With hunger, cold, and angry Jove did fight ;
Shock'd by a covenanting league's vast powers,
As holy and as catholic as ours :
Till Fortune's fruitless spite had made it known,
Her blows not shook, but riveted his throne.

Some lazy ages, lost in sleep and ease,
No action leave to busy chronicles :
Such, whose supine felicity but makes
In story chasms, in epochas mistakes ;
O'er whom Time gently shakes his wings of down,
Till with his silent sickle they are mown.
Such is not Charles's too, too active age,
Which, govern'd by the wild distemper'd rage
Of some black star infecting all the skies,
Made him at his own cost, like Adam, wise.
Tremble, ye nations, who, secure before, [bore ;
Laugh'd at those arms that 'gainst ourselves we
Roused by the lash of his own stubborn tail,
Our lion now will foreign foes assail.
With Alga who the sacred altar strows ;
To all the sea-gods Charles an offering owes ;

A bull to thee, Portunus, shall be slain,
A lamb to you, ye Tempests of the main :
For those loud storms, that did against him roar,
Have cast his shipwreck'd vessel on the shore.
Yet as wise artists mix their colours so,
That by degrees they from each other go ;
Black steals unheeded from the neighbouring white,
Without offending the well-cozen'd sight ;
So on us stole our blessed change, while we
The' effect did feel, but scarce the manner see.
Frosts that constrain the ground, and birth deny
To flowers that in its womb expecting lie,
Do seldom their usurping power withdraw,
But raging floods pursue their hasty thaw.
Our thaw was mild, the cold not chased away,
But lost in kindly heat of lengthen'd day.
Heaven would no bargain for its blessings drive,
But, what we could not pay for, freely give.
The Prince of peace would, like himself, confer
A gift unhoped without the price of war :
Yet, as he knew his blessing's worth, took care
That we should know it by repeated prayer ;
Which storm'd the skies, and ravish'd Charles from
As Heaven itself is took by violence. [thence,
Booth's forward valour only served to show
He durst that duty pay we all did owe :
The' attempt was fair ; but Heaven's prefixed hour
Not come ; so, like the watchful traveller,
That by the moon's mistaken light did rise,
Lay down again, and closed his weary eyes.
'Twas Monk, whom Providence design'd to loose
Those real bonds false freedom did impose.
The blessed saints, that watch'd this turning scene,
Did from their stars with joyful wonder lean,

To see small clues draw vastest weights along,
Not in their bulk, but in their order strong.
Thus pencils can by one slight touch restore
Smiles to that changed face that wept before.
With ease such fond chimeras we pursue,
As fancy frames for fancy to subdue :
But when ourselves to action we betake,
It shuns the mint, like gold that chemists make.
How hard was then his task, at once to be
What in the body natural we see !
Man's Architect distinctly did ordain
The charge of muscles, nerves, and of the brain,
Through viewless conduits spirits to dispense,
The springs of motion from the seat of sense.
'Twas not the hasty product of a day,
But the well-ripen'd fruit of wise delay.
He, like a patient angler, ere he strook,
Would let him play a while upon the hook.
Our healthful food the stomach labours thus,
At first embracing what it straight doth crush.
Wise leaches will not vain receipts obtrude,
While growing pains pronounce the humours crude ;
Deaf to complaints they wait upon the ill,
Till some safe crisis authorize their skill.
Nor could his acts too close a vizard wear,
To 'scape their eyes whom guilt had taught to fear,
And guard with caution that polluted nest,
Whence Legion twice before was dispossess'd :
Once sacred house ; which when they enter'd in,
They thought the place would sanctify a sin ;
Like those that vainly hoped kind Heaven would
wink,
While to excess on martyrs' tombs they drink.
And as devouter Turks first warn their souls
To part, before they taste forbidden bowls ;

So these, when their black crimes they went about,
First timely charm'd their useless conscience out.
Religion's name against itself was made ;
The shadow served the substance to invade ;
Like zealous missions, they did care pretend
Of souls in show, but made their gold their end.
The' incensed Powers beheld with scorn from high
And heaven so far distant from the sky. [ground,
Which durst, with horses' hoofs that beat the
And martial brass, bely the thunder's sound ;
'Twas hence at length just Vengeance thought it fit
To speed their ruin by their impious wit.
Thus Sforza, cursed with a too fertile brain,
Lost by his wiles the power his wit did gain.
Henceforth their *fougue* must spend at lesser rate
Than in its flames to wrap a nation's fate.
Suffer'd to live, they are like Helots set,
A virtuous shame within us to beget.
For by example most we sinn'd before,
And glass-like clearness mix'd with frailty bore,
But since reform'd by what we did amiss,
We by our sufferings learn to prize our bliss.
Like early lovers, whose unpractised hearts
Were long the May-game of malicious arts,
When once they find their jealousies were vain,
With double heat renew their fires again.
'Twas this produced the joy that hurried o'er
Such swarms of English to the neighbouring shore,
To fetch that prize by which Batavia made
So rich amends for our impoverish'd trade.
Oh had you seen from Schevelin's barren shore,
(Crowded with troops, and barren now no more)
Afflicted Holland to his farewell bring
True sorrow—Holland to regret a king !

While waiting him his royal fleet did ride,
And willing winds to their lower'd sails denied.
The wavering streamers, flags, and standards out,
The merry seamen's rude but cheerful shout;
And last the cannons' voice that shook the skies,
And, as it fares in sudden ecstasies,
At once bereft us both of ears and eyes.
The Naseby, now no longer England's shame,
But better to be lost in Charles's name,
(Like some unequal bride in nobler sheets)
Receives her lord: the joyful London meets
The princely York, himself alone a freight;
The Swiftsure groans beneath great Gloster's
weight,

Secure as when the halcyon breeds, with these
He that was born to drown might cross the seas.
Heaven could not own a Providence, and take
The wealth three nations ventured at a stake.
The same indulgence Charles's voyage bless'd,
Which in his right had miracles confess'd.
The winds, that never moderation knew,
Afraid to blow too much, too faintly blew;
Or out of breath with joy could not enlarge
Their straiten'd lungs, or conscious of their charge.
The British Amphytrite, smooth and clear,
In richer azure never did appear;
Proud her returning Prince to entertain
With the submitted fasces of the main.

AND welcome now, Great Monarch! to your own;
Behold the' approaching cliffs of Albion:
It is no longer motion cheats your view,
As you meet it, the land approacheth you.
The land returns, and, in the white it wears,
The marks of penitence and sorrow bears.

But you, whose goodness your descent doth show,
Your heavenly parentage and earthly too ;
By that same mildness which your father's crown
Before did ravish, shall secure your own.
Not tied to rules of policy, you find
Revenge less sweet than a forgiving mind.
Thus, when the' Almighty would to Moses give
A sight of all he could behold and live,
A voice before his entry did proclaim
Long-suffering, Goodness, Mercy, in his name.
Your power to justice doth submit your cause,
Your goodness only is above the laws ;
Whose rigid letter, while pronounced by you,
Is softer made : so winds that tempests brew,
When through Arabian groves they take their flight,
Made wanton with rich odours, lose their spite :
And as those lees, that trouble it, refine
The agitated soul of generous wine,
So tears of joy, for your returning spilt,
Work out, and expiate our former guilt.
Methinks I see those crowds on Dover's strand,
Who, in their haste to welcome you to land,
Choked up the breach with their still-growing store,
And made a wilder torrent on the shore ;
While, spurr'd with eager thoughts of past delight,
Those who had seen you court a second sight ;
Preventing still your steps, and making haste
To meet you often wheresoe'er you pass'd.
How shall I speak of that triumphant day,
When you renew'd the' expiring pomp of May !
(A month that owns an interest in your name ;
You and the flowers are its peculiar claim.)
That star that at your birth shone out so bright,
It stain'd the duller sun's meridian light,

Did once again its potent fires renew,
Guiding our eyes to find and worship you.

And now time's whiter series is begun,
Which in soft centuries shall smoothly run :
Those clouds, that overcast your morn, shall fly,
Dispell'd to farthest corners of the sky.
Our nation with united interest bless'd,
Not now content to poise, shall sway the rest.
Abroad your empire shall no limits know,
But, like the sea, in boundless circles flow.
Your much-loved fleet shall, with a wide command,
Besiege the petty monarchs of the land !
And as old Time his offspring swallow'd down,
Our ocean in its depths all seas shall drown.
Their wealthy trade from pirates' rapine free,
Our merchants shall no more adventurers be ;
Nor in the farthest east those dangers fear,
Which humble Holland must dissemble here.
Spain to your gift alone her Indies owes ;
For what the powerful takes not, he bestows :
And France, that did an exile's presence fear,
May justly apprehend you still too near.
At home the hateful names of party cease,
And factious souls are wearied into peace.
The discontented now are only they
Whose crimes before did your just cause betray :
Of those your edicts some reclaim from sin,
But most your life and bless'd example win.
Oh happy prince, whom Heaven hath taught the
way,

By paying vows, to have more vows to pay !
Oh happy age ! oh times like those alone
By fate reserved for great Augustus' throne !
When the joint growth of arms and arts foreshow
The world a monarch, and that monarch—You,

TO
HIS SACRED MAJESTY.
 A PANEGYRIC ON HIS CORONATION.

1660.

IN that wild deluge where the world was drown'd,
 When life and sin one common tomb had found,
 The first small prospect of a rising hill
 With various notes of joy the Ark did fill;
 Yet when that flood in its own depths was drown'd,
 It left behind it false and slippery ground;
 And the more solemn pomp was still deferr'd,
 Till new-born Nature in fresh looks appear'd.
 Thus, royal Sir, to see you landed here,
 Was cause enough of triumph for a year:
 Nor would your care those glorious joys repeat,
 Till they at once might be secure and great;
 Till your kind beams, by their continued stay,
 Had warm'd the ground, and call'd the damps away.
 Such vapours, while your powerful influence dries,
 Then soonest vanish when they highest rise.
 Had greater haste these sacred rites prepared,
 Some guilty months had in your triumphs shared:
 But this untainted year is all your own;
 Your glories may without our crimes be shown.
 We had not yet exhausted all our store,
 When you refresh'd our joys by adding more:
 As Heaven, of old, dispensed celestial dew,
 You gave us manna, and still give us new.
 Now our sad ruins are removed from sight,
 The season, too, comes fraught with new delight:

Time seems not now beneath his years to stoop,
Nor do his wings with sickly feathers droop:
Soft western winds waft o'er the gaudy Spring,
And open'd scenes of flowers and blossoms bring
To grace this happy day, while you appear
Not king of us alone, but of the year.
All eyes you draw, and with the eyes the heart;
Of your own pomp yourself the greatest part.
Loud shouts the nation's happiness proclaim,
And Heaven this day is feasted with your name.
Your cavalcade the fair spectators view
From their high standings, yet look up to you.
From your brave train each singles out a prey,
And longs to date a conquest from your day.
Now charged with blessings, while you seek repose,
Officious Slumbers haste your eyes to close;
And glorious Dreams stand ready to restore
The pleasing shapes of all you saw before.
Next, to the sacred temple you are led,
Where waits a crown for your more sacred head:
How justly from the Church that crown is due,
Preserved from ruin, and restored by you!
The grateful choir their harmony employ,
Not to make greater, but more solemn joy.
Wrapp'd soft and warm, your name is sent on high,
As flames do on the wings of incense fly:
Music herself is lost; in vain she brings
Her choicest notes to praise the best of kings:
Her melting strains in you a tomb have found,
And lie, like bees, in their own sweetness drown'd.
He that brought peace all discord could atone;
His name is music of itself alone.
Now while the sacred oil anoints your head,
And fragrant scents, begun from you, are spread

Through the large dome ; the people's joyful sound,
Sent back, is still preserved in hallow'd ground ;
Which in one blessing mix'd descends on you,
As heighten'd spirits fall in richer dew.
Not that our wishes do increase your store ;
Full of yourself, you can admit no more :
We add not to your glory, but employ
Our time, like angels, in expressing joy.
Nor is it duty, or our hopes, alone
Create that joy, but full fruition :
We know those blessings which we must possess,
And judge of future by past happiness.
No promise can oblige a prince so much
Still to be good, as long to have been such.
A noble emulation heats your breast,
And your own fame now robs you of your rest.
Good actions still must be maintain'd with good,
As bodies nourish'd with resembling food.
You have already quench'd Sedition's brand ;
And Zeal, which burnt it, only warms the land.
The jealous sects, that dare not trust their cause
So far from their own will as to the laws,
You for their umpire and their synod take,
And their appeal alone to Cæsar make.
Kind Heaven so rare a temper did provide,
That Guilt repenting might in it confide.
Among our crimes oblivion may be set ;
But 'tis our King's perfection to forget.
Virtues, unknown to these rough northern climes,
From milder heavens you bring, without their
crimes.
Your calmness does no after-storms provide,
Nor seeming patience mortal anger hide.

When empire first from families did spring,
Then every father govern'd as a king ;
But you, that are a sovereign prince, allay
Imperial power with your paternal sway. [bends,
From those great cares when ease your soul, un-
Your pleasures are design'd to noble ends:
Born to command the mistress of the seas,
Your thoughts themselves in that blue empire
Hither in summer evenings you repair [please.
To take the *fraicheur* of the purer air:
Undaunted here you ride, when Winter raves,
With Cæsar's heart, that rose above the waves.
More I could sing, but fear my numbers stays ;
No loyal subject dares that courage praise.
In stately frigates most delight you find,
Where well-drawn battles fire your martial mind.
What to your cares we owe is learn'd from hence,
When even your pleasures serve for our defence.
Beyond your court flows in the' admitted tide,
Where in new depths the wondering fishes glide:
Here in a royal bed the waters sleep ;
When tired at sea, within this bay they creep :
Here the mistrustful fowl no harm suspects,
So safe are all things which our King protects.
From your loved Thames a blessing yet is due,
Second alone to that it brought in you ;
A queen, near whose chaste womb, ordain'd by Fate,
The souls of kings unborn for bodies wait.
It was your love before made discord cease ;
Your love is destined to your country's peace.
Both Indies, rivals in your bed, provide
With gold or jewels to adorn your bride.
This to a mighty King presents rich ore,
While that with incense does a god implore.

Two kingdoms wait your doom, and, as you choose,
This must receive a crown, or that must lose.
Thus from your royal oak, like Jove's of old,
Are answers sought, and destinies foretold;
Propitious oracles are begged with vows,
And crowns that grow upon the sacred boughs.
Your subjects, while you weigh the nation's fate,
Suspend to both their doubtful love or hate;
Choose only, Sir, that so they may possess
With their own peace, their children's happiness.

SATIRE ON THE DUTCH.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR M.DC.LXII.

As needy gallants, in the scrivener's hands,
Court the rich knaves that gripe their mortgaged
The first fat buck of all the season's sent, [lands,
And keeper takes no fee in compliment;
The dotage of some Englishmen is such,
To fawn on those who ruin them, the Dutch.
They shall have all, rather than make a war
With those who of the same religion are.
The Straits, the Guinea-trade, the herrings too;
Nay, to keep friendship, they shall pickle you.
Some are resolved not to find out the cheat,
But, cuckold-like, love them that do the feat.
What injuries soe'er upon us fall,
Yet still the same religion answers all.
Religion wheedled us to Civil war,
Drew English blood, and Dutchmen's now would
spare.
Be gull'd no longer; for you 'll find it true,
They have no more religion, faith! than you.

Interest's the god they worship in their State,
And we, I take it, have not much of that.
Well monarchies may own religion's name,
But states are atheists in their very frame.
They share a sin ; and such proportions fall,
That, like a stink, 'tis nothing to them all.
Think on their rapine, falsehood, cruelty,
And that what once they were, they still would be.
To one well-born the' affront is worse and more,
When he's abused and baffled by a boor.
With an ill grace the Dutch their mischiefs do ;
They 'ave both ill nature and ill manners too.
Well may they boast themselves an ancient nation,
For they were bred ere manners were in fashion ;
And their new Commonwealth has set them free
Only from honour and civility.
Venetians do not more uncouthly ride,
Than did their lumber State mankind bestride.
Their sway became them with as ill a mien,
As their own paunches' swell above their chin.
Yet is their empire no true growth but humour,
And only two kings' touch can cure the tumour,
As Cato did in Afric fruits display,
Let us before our eyes their Indies lay ;
All loyal English will like him conclude,
Let Cæsar live, and Carthage be subdued.

ANNUS MIRABILIS :
THE YEAR OF WONDERS, M.DC.LXVI.
An Historical Poem.

AN ACCOUNT OF
THE ENSUING POEM,
IN A LETTER TO THE HON. SIR ROBERT HOWARD.

SIR,

I AM so many ways obliged to you, and so little able to return your favours, that, like those who owe too much, I can only live by getting farther into your debt. You have not only been careful of my fortune, which was the effect of your nobleness, but you have been solicitous of my reputation, which is that of your kindness. It is not long since I gave you the trouble of perusing a play for me, and now, instead of an acknowledgment, I have given you a greater, in the correction of a Poem. But since you are to bear this persecution, I will at least give you the encouragement of a martyr;—you could never suffer in a nobler cause. For I have chosen the most heroic subject which any Poet could desire; I have taken upon me to describe the motives, the beginning, progress, and successes, of a most just and necessary war; in it, the care, management, and prudence of our King; the conduct and valour of a royal admiral¹, and of two incomparable generals²;

¹ James, Duke of York.

² Prince Rupert, and the Duke of Albemarle.

the invincible courage of our captains and seamen; and three glorious victories, the result of all. After this, I have in the fire³ the most deplorable, but, withal, the greatest argument that can be imagined; the destruction being so swift, so sudden, so vast and miserable, as nothing can parallel in story. The former part of this Poem, relating to the war, is but a due expiation for my not serving my king and country in it. All gentlemen are almost obliged to it; and I know no reason we should give that advantage to the commonalty of England, to be foremost in brave actions, which the nobles of France would never suffer in their peasants. I should not have written this, but to a person who has been ever forward to appear in all employments whither his honour and generosity have called him. The latter part of my Poem, which describes the fire, I owe first to the piety and fatherly affection of our Monarch to his suffering subjects; and, in the second place, to the courage, loyalty, and magnanimity of the city: both which were so conspicuous that I have wanted words to celebrate them as they deserve.

I have called my Poem Historical, not Epic; though both the actions and actors are as much heroic as any poem can contain. But, since the action is not properly one, nor that accomplished in the last successes, I have judged it too bold a title for a few stanzas, which are little more in number than a single Iliad, or the longest of the *Aeneids*. For this reason (I mean not of length, but broken action, tied too severely to the laws of History) I am apt to agree with those who rank

³ The fire of London, which destroyed more than 13,000 houses.

Lucan rather among Historians in verse, than Epic poets ; in whose room, if I am not deceived, Silius Italicus, though a worse writer, may more justly be admitted.

I have chosen to write my Poem in quatrains, or stanzas of four in alternate rhyme, because I have ever judged them more noble, and of greater dignity, both for the sound and number, than any other verse in use amongst us ; in which I am sure I have your approbation. The learned languages have, certainly, a great advantage of us, in not being tied to the slavery of any rhyme, and were less constrained in the quantity of every syllable, which they might vary with spondees or dactyls, besides so many other helps of grammatical figures, for the lengthening or abbreviation of them, than the modern are in the close of that one syllable, which often confines and more often corrupts the sense of all the rest. But in this necessity of our rhymes, I have always found the couplet verse most easy, (though not so proper for this occasion) for there the work is sooner at an end, every two lines concluding the labour of the poet ; but in quatrains he is to carry it farther on ; and not only so, but to bear along in his head the troublesome sense of four lines together. For those who write correctly in this kind must needs acknowledge, that the last line of the stanza is to be considered in the composition of the first. Neither can we give ourselves the liberty of making any part of a verse for the sake of rhyme, or concluding with a word which is not current English, or using the variety of female rhymes⁴,

⁴ By 'female rhymes,' says Mr. Malone, Dryden means *double rhymes*. See *Prose Works*, vol. ii.

all which our fathers practised : and for the female rhymes, they are still in use amongst other nations ; with the Italian in every line, with the Spaniard promiscuously, with the French alternately ; as those who have read the *Alarique*, the *Pucelle*, or any of their later poems, will agree with me. And besides this, they write in *Alexandrines*, or verses of six feet ; such as amongst us is the old translation of *Homer* by *Chapman* ; all which, by lengthening of their chain, makes the sphere of their activity the larger.

I have dwelt too long upon the choice of my stanza, which, you may remember, is much better defended in the preface to *Gondibert* ; and therefore I will hasten to acquaint you with my endeavours in the writing. In general, I will only say, I have never yet seen the description of any naval fight in the proper terms which are used at sea : and if there be any such, in another language, as that of *Lucan* in the Third of his *Pharsalia*, yet I could not avail myself of it in the English ; the terms of art in every tongue bearing more of the idiom of it than any other words. We hear, indeed, among our poets, of the thundering of guns, the smoke, the disorder, and the slaughter ; but all these are common notions. And, certainly, as those who, in a logical dispute, keep in general terms, would hide a fallacy ; so those, who do it in any poetical description, would veil their ignorance.

Descriptas servare vices, operumque colores,
Cur ego, si nequeo ignoroque, Poeta salutor ?

For my own part, if I had little knowledge of the sea, yet I have thought it no shame to learn ; and if I have made some few mistakes, it is only, as

you can bear me witness, because I have wanted opportunity to correct them; the whole Poem being first written, and now sent you from a place, where I have not so much as the converse of any seaman. Yet, though the trouble I had in writing it was great, it was more than recompensed by the pleasure. I found myself so warm in celebrating the praises of military men, two such especially as the Prince and General, that it is no wonder if they inspired me with thoughts above my ordinary level. And I am well satisfied that, as they are incomparably the best subject I ever had, excepting only the Royal Family; so also, that this I have written of them is much better than what I have performed on any other. I have been forced to help out other arguments; but this has been bountiful to me; they have been low and barren of praise, and I have exalted them, and made them fruitful; but here—‘*Omnia sponte sua reddit justissima tellus.*’ I have had a large, a fair, and a pleasant field; so fertile, that, without my cultivating, it has given me two harvests in a summer, and in both oppressed the reaper. All other greatness in subjects is only counterfeit: it will not endure the test of danger; the greatness of arms is only real: other greatness burdens a nation with its weight; this supports it with its strength. And as it is the happiness of the age, so it is the peculiar goodness of the best of Kings, that we may praise his subjects without offending him. Doubtless it proceeds from a just confidence of his own virtue, which the lustre of no other can be so great as to darken in him; for the good or the valiant are never safely praised under a bad or a degenerate prince.

But to return from this digression to a farther account of my Poem. I must crave leave to tell you, that as I have endeavoured to adorn it with noble thoughts, so much more to express those thoughts with elocution. The composition of all poems is, or ought to be, of wit; and wit in the poet, or wit-writing (if you will give me leave to use a school-distinction) is no other than the faculty of imagination in the writer, which, like a nimble spaniel, beats over and ranges through the field of memory, till it springs the quarry it hunted after; or, without metaphor, which searches over all the memory for the species or ideas of those things which it designs to represent. Wit written is that which is well defined, the happy result of thought, or product of imagination. But to proceed from wit, in the general notion of it, to the proper wit of an heroic or historical poem, I judge it chiefly to consist in the delightful imaging of persons, actions, passions, or things. 'Tis not the jerk or sting of an epigram, nor the seeming contradiction of a poor antithesis, (the delight of an ill-judging audience in a play of rhyme) nor the gingle of a more poor paranomasia; neither is it so much the morality of a grave sentence, affected by Lucan, but more sparingly used by Virgil; but it is some lively and apt description, dressed in such colours of speech, that it sets before your eyes the absent object as perfectly and more delightfully than nature. So then, the first happiness of the poet's imagination is properly invention, or finding of the thought; the second is fancy, or the variation, deriving, or moulding of that thought, as the judgment represents it proper to the subject; the third is elocution, or the art of

clothing and adorning that thought, so found and varied, in apt, significant, and sounding words: the quickness of the imagination is seen in the invention, the fertility in the fancy, and the accuracy in the expression. For the two first of these, Ovid is famous amongst the poets; for the latter, Virgil. Ovid images more often the movements and affections of the mind, either combating between two contrary passions, or extremely decomposed by one. His words, therefore, are the least part of his care; for he pictures Nature in disorder, with which the study and choice of words is inconsistent. This is the proper wit of dialogue or discourse, and consequently of the drama, where all that is said is to be supposed the effect of sudden thought; which, though it excludes not the quickness of wit in repartees, yet admits not a too curious election of words, too frequent allusions, or use of tropes, or in fine, any thing that shows remoteness of thought or labour in the writer. On the other side, Virgil speaks not so often to us in the person of another like Ovid, but in his own: he relates almost all things as from himself, and thereby gains more liberty than the other, to express his thoughts with all the graces of elocution, to write more figuratively, and to confess as well the labour as the force of his imagination. Though he describes his Dido well and naturally in the violence of her passions, yet he must yield in that to the Myrrha, the Biblis, the Althæa, of Ovid; for, as great an admirer of him as I am, I must acknowledge, that if I see not more of their souls than I see of Dido's, at least I have a greater concernment for them; and

that convinces me that Ovid has touched those tender strokes more delicately than Virgil could. But when action or persons are to be described, when any such image is to be set before us; how bold, how masterly are the strokes of Virgil! We see the objects he presents us with in their native figures, in their proper motions; but so we see them, as our own eyes could never have beheld them so beautiful in themselves. We see the soul of the poet, like that universal one of which he speaks, informing and moving through all his pictures:

— Totamque infusa per artus
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.

We behold him embellishing his images, as he makes Venus breathing beauty upon her son Eneas:

— Lamenque juvenis
Purpureum, et lentis oculis effundat hiores:
Quale manus addunt ebeo decus, aut sibi flavo
Argentum, Parisve lapis, circumdatur aura.

See his Tempest, his Funeral Sports, his Combat of Turnus and Eneas; and in his Georgics, which I esteem the divinest part of all his writings, the Plague, the Country, the Battle of Bulls, the Labour of the Bees, and those many other excellent images of Nature, most of which are neither great in themselves, nor have any natural ornament to bear them up; but the words wherewith he describes them are so excellent, that it might be well applied to him which was said by Ovid, *‘Materia superabat opus.’* The very sound of his words has often somewhat that is conatural to the subject; and while we read him, we sit, as in a play, beholding the scenes of

what he represents. To perform this, he made frequent use of tropes, which, you know, change the nature of a known word, by applying it to some other signification; and this is it which Horace means in his Epistle to the Pisos:

*Dixeris egregiè, notum si callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum.*——

But I am sensible I have presumed too far to entertain you with a rude discourse of that art which you both know so well, and put into practice with so much happiness. Yet before I leave Virgil, I must own the vanity to tell you, and by you the world, that he has been my master in this Poem: I have followed him every where; I know not with what success, but I am sure with diligence enough: my images are many of them copied from him, and the rest are imitations of him. My expressions also are as near as the idioms of the two languages would admit of in translation. And this, Sir, I have done with that boldness for which I will stand accountable to any of our little critics, who, perhaps, are no better acquainted with him than I am. Upon your first perusal of this Poem, you have taken notice of some words which I have innovated (if it be too bold for me to say, refined) upon his Latin; which, as I offer not to introduce into English prose, so I hope they are neither improper, nor altogether unelegant in verse; and in this, Horace will again defend me.

*Et nova factaque nuper habebunt verba fidem; si
Græco fonte cadent, parçè detorta.*——

The inference is exceeding plain: for, if a Roman poet might have liberty to coin a word, supposing

only that it was derived from the Greek, was put into a Latin termination, and that he used this liberty but seldom, and with modesty; how much more justly may I challenge that privilege to do it, with the same prerequisites, from the best and most judicious of Latin writers? In some places, where either the fancy or the words were his, or any other's, I have noted it in the margin, that I might not seem a plagiarist; in others I have neglected it, to avoid as well tediousness as the affectation of doing it too often. Such descriptions or images, well wrought, which I promise not for mine, are, as I have said, the adequate delight of heroic poesy; for they beget admiration, which is its proper object; as the images of the burlesque, which is contrary to this, by the same reason, beget laughter: for the one shows Nature beautified, as in the picture of a fair woman, which we all admire; the other shows her deformed, as in that of a lazar, or of a fool with distorted face and antic gestures, at which we cannot forbear to laugh, because it is a deviation from nature. But though the same images serve equally for the epic poesy, and for the historic and panegyric, which are branches of it, yet a several sort of sculpture is to be used in them. If some of them are to be like those of Juvenal, '*stantes in curribus Æmilianis*,' heroes drawn in their triumphal chariots, and in their full proportion; others are to be, like that of Virgil, '*spirantia mollius æra*:' there is somewhat more of softness and tenderness to be shown in them.

You will soon find I write not this without concern. Some, who have seen a paper of verses

which I wrote last year to her Highness the Duchess, have accused them of that only thing I could defend in them. They said, I did ‘*humis ærperare*’; that I wanted not only height of fancy, but dignity of words, to set it off. I might well answer with that of Horace, ‘*nunc non erat his locus*’; I knew I addressed them to a lady, and accordingly I affected the softness of expression, and the smoothness of measure, rather than the height of thought; and in what I did endeavour, it is no vanity to say I have succeeded. I detest arrogance; but there is some difference betwixt that and a just defence. But I will not farther bribe your candour, or the reader’s. I leave them to speak for me; and, if they can, to make out that character, not pretending to a greater, which I have given them⁵.

And now, Sir, it is time I should relieve you from the tedious length of this account. You have better and more profitable employment for your hours, and I wrong the public to detain you longer. In conclusion, I must leave my Poem to you with all its faults, which I hope to find fewer in the printing by your emendations. I know you are not of the number of those of whom the younger Pliny speaks; ‘*Nec sunt parum multi, qui carpere amicos suos judicium vocant*’; I am rather too secure of you on that side. Your candour in pardoning my errors may make you more remiss in correcting them, if you will not withal consider that they come into the world with your approbation, and through your hands.

⁵ A copy of verses, here introduced, to Anne Hyde, Duchess of York, will be found in vol. ii. of Dryden’s poems.

I beg from you the greatest favour you can confer upon an absent person, since I repose upon your management what is dearest to me, my fame and reputation; and therefore I hope it will stir you up to make my Poem fairer by many of your blots; if not, you know the story of the gamester, who married the rich man's daughter, and, when her father denied the portion, christened all the children by his surname, that if, in conclusion, they must beg, they should do so by one name as well as by the other. But since the reproach of my faults will light on you, it is but reason I should do you that justice to the readers, to let them know; that if there be any thing tolerable in this Poem, they owe the argument to your choice, the writing to your encouragement, the correction to your judgment, and the care of it to your friendship, to which he must ever acknowledge himself to owe all things, who is,

SIR,

the most obedient, and most

faithful of your servants,

JOHN DRYDEN,

From Charlton in Wiltshire,
Nov. 10, 1666.

TO THE
Metropolis of Great Britain,
THE MOST RENOWNED AND
LATE FLOURISHING CITY OF LONDON,
IN ITS REPRESENTATIVES

*The Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, the Sheriffs,
and Council of it.*

As perhaps I am the first who ever presented a work of this nature to the metropolis of any nation, so it is likewise consonant to justice, that he who was to give the first example of such a Dedication, should begin it with that City which has set a pattern to all others of true loyalty, invincible courage, and unshaken constancy. Other cities have been praised for the same virtues, but I am much deceived if any have so dearly purchased their reputation; their fame has been won them by cheaper trials than an expensive, though necessary war, a consuming pestilence, and a more consuming fire. To submit yourselves with that humility to the judgments of Heaven, and at the same time to raise yourselves with that vigour above all human enemies; to be combated at once from above and from below; to be struck down and to triumph; I know not whether such trials have been ever paralleled in any nation; the resolution and successes of them never can be. Never had Prince or People more mutual reason to love each other, if suffering for each other can endear affection. You have come together a pair of matchless lovers, through many difficulties; he through a long exile, various traverses of fortune, and the interposition of many rivals, who violently ravished and withheld you from him; and cer-

tainly you have had your share in sufferings. But Providence has cast upon you want of trade, that you might appear bountiful to your country's necessities; and the rest of your afflictions are not more the effects of God's displeasure (frequent examples of them having been in the reign of the most excellent princes) than occasions for the manifesting of your Christian and civil virtues. To you, therefore, this 'Year of Wonders' is justly dedicated, because you have made it so. You, who are to stand a wonder to all years and ages, and who have built yourselves an immortal monument on your own ruins. You are now a phoenix in her ashes, and, as far as humanity can approach, a great emblem of the suffering Deity: but Heaven never made so much piety and virtue to leave it miserable. I have heard, indeed, of some virtuous persons who have ended unfortunately, but never of any virtuous nation: Providence is engaged too deeply, when the cause becomes so general; and I cannot imagine it has resolved the ruin of that people at home, which it has blessed abroad with such successes. I am therefore to conclude that your sufferings are at an end; and that one part of my Poem has not been more an history of your destruction, than the other a prophesy of your restoration. The accomplishment of which happiness, as it is the wish of all true Englishmen, so is it by none more passionately desired, than by

the greatest of your admirers,
and most humble of your servants,

JOHN DRYDEN.

ANNUS MIRABILIS:

THE YEAR OF WONDERS, M.DC.LXVI.

IN thriving arts long time had Holland grown,
Crouching at home, and cruel when abroad,
Scarce leaving us the means to claim our own;
Our King they courted, and our merchants awed.

Trade, which, like blood, should circularly flow,
Stopped in their channels, found its freedom lost:
Thither the wealth of all the world did go,
And seem'd but shipwreck'd on so base a coast.

For them alone the heavens had kindly heat,
In eastern quarries ripening precious dew:
For them the Idumæan balm did sweat,
And in hot Ceylon spicy forests grew.

The sun but seem'd the labourer of the year;
Each waxing moon supplied her watry store
To swell those tides, which from the Line did bear
Their brimfull vessels to the Belgian shore.

Thus, mighty in her ships, stood Carthage long,
And swept the riches of the world from far;
Yet stoop'd to Rome, less wealthy, but more strong;
And this may prove our second Punic war.

What peace can be where both to one pretend?
(But they more diligent, and we more strong)
Or if a peace, it soon must have an end;
For they would grow too powerful were it long.

Behold two nations then, engaged so far, [land;
That each seven years the fit must shake each
Where France will side to weaken us by war,
Who only can his vast designs withstand.

See how he feeds the Iberian with delays,
To render us his timely friendship vain;
And, while his secret soul on Flanders preys,
He rocks the cradle of the Babe of Spain.

Such deep designs of empire does he lay
O'er them whose cause he seems to take in hand;
And, prudently, would make them lords at sea,
To whom with ease he can give laws by land.

This saw our King; and long within his breast
His pensive counsels balanced to and fro:
He grieved the land he freed should be oppress'd,
And he less for it than usurpers do.

His generous mind the fair ideas drew
Of fame and honour, which in dangers lay;
Where wealth, like fruit on precipices, grew,
Not to be gather'd but by birds of prey.

The loss and gain each fatally were great;
And still his subjects call'd aloud for war.
But peaceful kings, o'er martial people set,
Each other's poise and counterbalance are.

He first survey'd the charge with careful eyes,
Which none but mighty monarchs could maintain;
Yet judged, like vapours that from limbecs rise,
It would in richer showers descend again.

At length resolved to assert the watry ball,
He in himself did whole armados bring;
Him aged seamen might their master call,
And choose for general, were he not their king,

It seems as every ship their sovereign knows,
His awful summons they so soon obey ;
So hear the scaly herd when Proteus blows,
And so to pasture follow through the sea.

To see this fleet upon the ocean move,
Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies ;
And Heaven, as if there wanted lights above,
For tapers made two glaring comets rise.

Whether they unctuous exhalations are
Fired by the sun, or seeming so alone ;
Or each some more remote and slippery star,
Which loses footing when to mortals shown :

Or one, that bright companion of the sun,
Whose glorious aspect seal'd our new-born King ;
And now a round of greater years begun,
New influence from his walks of light did bring.

Victorious York did, first, with famed success,
To his known valour make the Dutch give place :
Thus Heaven our Monarch's fortune did confess,
Beginning conquest from his royal race.

But since it was decreed, auspicious King,
In Britain's right that thou shouldst wed the main,
Heaven, as a gage, would cast some precious thing,
And therefore doom'd that Lawson should be slain.

Lawson amongst the foremost met his fate,
Whom sea-green sirens from the rocks lament ;
Thus as an offering for the Grecian state,
He first was kill'd who first to battle went.

Their chief blown up, in air, not waves, expired,
To which his pride presumed to give the law :
The Dutch confess'd Heaven present, and retired,
And all was Britain the wide Ocean saw

To nearest ports their shatter'd ships repair,
Where by our dreadful cannon they lay awed:
So reverently men quit the open air,
When thunder speaks the angry gods abroad.

And now approach'd their fleet from India, fraught
With all the riches of the rising sun;
And precious sand from southern climates brought,
The fatal regions where the war begun.

Like hunted castors, conscious of their store,
Their way-laid wealth to Norway's coast they
bring:

There first the North's cold bosom spices bore,
And Winter brooded on the eastern Spring.

By the rich scent we found our perfumed prey,
Which, flank'd with rocks, did close in covert lie;
And round about their murdering cannon lay,
At once to threaten and invite the eye.

Fiercer than cannon, and than rocks more hard,
The English undertake the' unequal war:
Seven ships alone, by which the port is barred,
Besiege the Indies, and all Denmark dare.

These fight like husbands, but like lovers those:
These fain would keep, and those more fain enjoy;
And to such height their frantic passion grows,
That what both love both hazard to destroy.

Amidst whole heaps of spices lights a ball,
And now their odours arm'd against them fly:
Some precious by shatter'd porcelain fall,
And some by aromatic splinters die.

And though by tempests of the prize bereft,
In Heaven's inclemency some ease we find:
Our foes we vanquish'd by our valour left,
And only yielded to the seas and wind.

Nor wholly lost we so deserved a prey ;
For storms, repenting, part of it restored :
Which, as a tribute from the Baltic sea,
The British Ocean sent her mighty Lord.

Go, mortals, now, and vex yourselves in vain
For wealth, which so uncertainly must come ;
When what was brought so far, and with such pain,
Was only kept to lose it nearer home.

The son who, twice three months on the ocean toss'd,
Prepared to tell what he had pass'd before,
Now sees in English ships the Holland coast,
And parents' arms, in vain, stretch'd from the shore.

This careful husband had been long away,
Whom his chaste wife and little children mourn ;
Who on their fingers learn'd to tell the day
On which their father promised to return.

Such are the proud designs of human kind,
And so we suffer shipwreck every where !
Alas ! what port can such a pilot find,
Who in the night of fate must blindly steer ?

The undistinguish'd seeds of good and ill
Heaven in his bosom from our knowledge hides ;
And draws them in contempt of human skill,
Which oft, for friends, mistaken foes provides.

Let Munster's prelate ever be accurs'd,
In whom we seek the German faith in vain :
Alas ! that he should teach the English first,
That fraud and avarice in the church could reign !

Happy, who never trust a stranger's will,
Whose friendship's in his interest understood !
Since money given but tempts him to be ill,
When power is too remote to make him good.

Till now, alone the mighty nations strove;
The rest, at gaze, without the lists did stand:
And threatening France, placed like a painted Jove,
Kept idle thunder in his lifted hand.

That eunuch-guardian of rich Holland's trade,
Who envies us what he wants power to' enjoy;
Whose noiseful valour does no foe invade,
And weak assistance will his friends destroy.

Offended that we fought without his leave,
He takes this time his secret hate to show:
Which Charles does with a mind so calm receive,
As one that neither seeks nor shuns his foe.

With France, to aid the Dutch, the Danes unite;
France as their tyrant, Denmark as their slave:
But when with one three nations join to fight,
They silently confess that one more brave.

Lewis had chased the English from his shore;
But Charles the French as subjects does invite:
Would Heaven for each some Solomon restore,
Who, by their mercy, may decide their right.

Were subjects so but only by their choice,
And not from birth did forced dominion take,
Our prince alone would have the public voice,
And all his neighbours' realms would deserts
make.

He without fear a dangerous war pursues,
Which without rashness he began before.
As honour made him first the danger choose:
So still he makes it good on virtue's score.

The doubled charge his subjects' love supplies,
Who in that bounty to themselves are kind:
So glad Egyptians see their Nilus rise,
And in his plenty their abundance find.

With equal power he does two chiefs create,
Two such, as each seem'd worthiest when alone;
Each able to sustain a nation's fate,
Since both had found a greater in their own.

Both great in courage, conduct, and in fame,
Yet neither envious of the other's praise;
Their duty, faith, and interest too the same,
Like mighty partners equally they raise.

The Prince long time had courted Fortune's love,
But once possess'd did absolutely reign:
Thus with their Amazons the heroes strove, [gain,
And conquer'd first those beauties they would

The Duke beheld, like Scipio, with disdain,
That Carthage, which he ruin'd, rise once more;
And shook aloft the fasces of the main,
To fright those slaves with what they felt before.

Together to the watry camp they haste,
Whom matrons passing to their children show:
Infants' first vows for them to Heaven are cast,
And future people bless them as they go.

With them no riotous pomp, nor Asian train,
To' infect a navy with their gaudy fears;
To make slow fights, and victories but vain;
But war, severely, like itself, appears.

Diffusive of themselves, where'er they pass,
They make that warmth in others they expect:
Their valour works like bodies on a glass,
And does its image on their men project.

Our fleet divides, and straight the Dutch appear,
In number, and a famed commander, bold;
The narrow seas can scarce their navy bear,
Or crowded vessels can their soldiers hold.

The Duke, less numerous, but in courage more,
On wings of all the winds to combat flies :

His murdering guns a loud defiance roar,
And bloody crosses on his flag-staffs rise.

Both furl their sails, and strip them for the fight;

Their folded sheets dismiss the useless air :

The' Elean plains could boast no nobler sight,
When struggling champions did their bodies bare.

Borne each by other in a distant line,

The sea-built forts in dreadful order move :

So vast the noise, as if not fleets did join,

But lands unfix'd, and floating nations strove.

Now pass'd, on either side they nimbly tack ;

Both strive to intercept and guide the wind :

And in its eye more closely they come back,

To finish all the deaths they left behind.

On high-raised decks the haughty Belgians ride,

Beneath whose shade our humble frigates go :

Such port the elephant bears, and so defied

By the rhinoceros, her unequal foe.

And as the built, so different is the fight ;

Their mounting shot is on our sails design'd :

Deep in their hulls our deadly bullets light,

And through the yielding planks a passage find.

Our dreaded Admiral from far they threat,

Whose batter'd rigging their whole war receives :

All bare, like some old oak which tempests beat,

He stands, and sees below his scatter'd leaves.

Heroes of old, when wounded, shelter sought ;

But he, who meets all danger with disdain,

Een in their face his ship to anchor brought,

And, steeple-high, stood propp'd upon the main.

At this excess of courage, all-amazed,
The foremost of his foes awhile withdraw:
With such respect in enter'd Rome they gazed,
Who on high chairs the god-like fathers saw.
And now, as where Patroclus' body lay, [Greek ;
Here Trojan chiefs advanc'd, and there the
Ours o'er the Duke their pious wings display,
And theirs the noblest spoils of Britain seek.
Meantime his busy mariners he hastes,
His shatter'd sails with rigging to restore ;
And willing pines ascend his broken masts,
Whose lofty heads rise higher than before.
Straight to the Dutch he turns his dreadful prow,
More fierce the important quarrel to decide :
Like swans, in long array his vessels show,
Whose crests, advancing, do the waves divide.
They charge, recharge, and all along the sea
They drive, and squander the huge Belgian fleet:
Berkeley¹ alone, who nearest danger lay,
Did a like fate with lost Creüsa meet.
The night comes on, we eager to pursue
The combat still, and they ashamed to leave ;
Till the last streaks of dying day withdrew,
And doubtful moonlight did our rage deceive.
In the' English fleet each ship resounds with joy,
And loud applause of their great leader's fame :
In fiery dreams the Dutch they still destroy,
And, slumbering, smile at the imagined flame.
Not so the Holland fleet, who, tired and done,
Stretch'd on their decks, like weary oxen lie :
Faint sweats all down their mighty members run,
(Vast bulks, which little souls but ill supply.)

¹ Sir Charles Berkeley, Earl of Falmouth.

In dreams they fearful precipices tread,
Or, shipwreck'd, labour to some distant shore;
Or in dark churches walk among the dead;
They wake with horror, and dare sleep no more.

The morn they look on with unwilling eyes,
Till, from their main-top, joyful news they hear
Of ships, which by their mould bring new supplies,
And in their colours Belgian lions bear.

Our watchful General had discern'd from far
This mighty succour, which made glad the foe:
He sigh'd, but like a father of the war,
His face spake hope, while deep his sorrows flow.

His wounded men he first sends off to shore,
Never, till now, unwilling to obey : [plere,
They not their wounds, but want of strength de-
And think them happy who with him can stay.

Then, to the rest, ' Rejoice, (said he) to-day ;
In you the fortune of Great Britain lies :
Among so brave a people you are they
Whom Heaven has chose to fight for such a prize.

' If number English courages could quell,
We should at first have shunned, not met, our foes ;
Whose numerous sails the fearful only tell :
Courage from hearts, and not from numbers
grows.'

He said; nor needed more to say: with haste
To their known stations cheerfully they go ;
And all at once, disdaining to be last,
Solicit every gale to meet the foe.

Nor did the' encouraged Belgians long delay,
But, bold in others, not themselves, they stood ;
So thick, our navy scarce could steer their way,
But seem'd to wander in a moving wood.

Our little fleet was now engaged so far,
That, like the sword-fish in the whale, they fought;
The combat only seem'd a civil war,
Till through their bowels we our passage wrought.

Never had valour, no not ours, before
Done aught like this upon the land or main,
Where not to be o'ercome was to do more
Than all the conquests former kings did gain.

The mighty ghosts of our great Harries rose,
And armed Edwards look'd, with anxious eyes,
To see this fleet among unequal foes, [rise.

By which fate promised them their Charles should
Meantime the Belgians tack upon our rear, [send;
And raking chase-guns through our sterns they
Close by, their fire-ships, like jackals, appear,
Who on their lions for the prey attend.

Silent in smoke of cannon they came on:
(Such vapours once did fiery Cacus hide:)
In these the height of pleased revenge is shown,
Who burn contented by another's side.

Sometimes, from fighting squadrons of each fleet,
Deceived themselves, or to preserve some friend,
Two grappling Ætnas on the ocean meet,
And English fires with Belgian flames contend.

Now, at each tack, our little fleet grows less,
And, like maim'd fowl, swim lagging on the main:
Their greater loss their numbers scarce confess,
While they lose cheaper than the English gain.

Have you not seen, when, whistled from the fist,
Some falcon stoeps at what her eye design'd,
And with her eagerness the quarry miss'd,
Straight flies at check, and clips it down the wind?

The dastard crow that to the wood made wing,
And sees the groves no shelter can afford,
With her loud caws her craven kind does bring,
Who, safe in numbers, cuff the noble bird.

Among the Dutch thus Albemarle did fare:
He could not conquer, and disdain'd to fly;
Past hope of safety, 'twas his latest care,
Like falling Cæsar, decently to die.

Yet pity did his manly spirit move,
To see those perish who so well had fought;
And, generously, with his despair he strove,
Resolved to live, till he their safety wrought.

Let other Muses write his prosperous fate,
Of conquer'd nations tell, and kings restored;
But mine shall sing of his eclipsed estate,
Which, like the sun's, more wonders does afford.

He drew his mighty frigates all before,
On which the foe his fruitless force employs;
His weak ones deep into his rear he bore,
Remote from guns as sick men from the noise.

His fiery cannon did their passage guide,
And following smoke obscured them from the foe:
Thus Israel, safe from the Egyptians' pride,
By flaming pillars and by clouds did go.

Elsewhere the Belgian force we did defeat,
But here our courages did theirs subdue:
So Xenophon once led that famed retreat,
Which first the Asian empire overthrew.

The foe approach'd; and one, for his bold sin,
Was sunk; as he that touch'd the ark was slain:
The wild waves master'd him, and suck'd him in,
And smiling eddies dimpled on the main.

This seen, the rest at awful distance stood,
As if they had been there as servants set,
To stay, or to go on, as he thought good,
And not pursue, but wait on his retreat.

So Libyan huntsmen, on some sandy plain,
From shady covers roused, the lion chase;
The kingly beast roars out with loud disdain,
And slowly moves, unknowing to give place.

But if some one approach to dare his force,
He swings his tail, and swiftly turns him round;
With one paw seizes on his trembling horse,
And with the other tears him to the ground,

Amidst these toils succeeds the balmy night;
Now hissing waters the quench'd guns restore;
And weary waves, withdrawing from the fight,
Lie lull'd and panting on the silent shore.

The moon shone clear on the becalmed flood,
Where, while her beams like glittering silver play,
Upon the deck our careful General stood,
And deeply mused on the succeeding day.

' That happy sun, (said he) will rise again,
Who twice victorious did our navy see:
And I alone must view him rise in vain,
Without one ray of all his star for me.

' Yet like an English General will I die,
And all the ocean make my spacious grave:
Women and cowards on the land may lie:
The sea's a tomb that's proper for the brave.'

Restless he pass'd the remnant of the night,
Till the fresh air proclaim'd the morning nigh;
And burning ships, the martyrs of the fight,
With paler fires beheld the eastern sky.

But now, his stores of ammunition spent,
His naked valour is his only guard ;
Rare thunders are from his dumb cannon sent,
And solitary guns are scarcely heard.
Thus far had Fortune power, he forced to stay,
Nor longer durst with Virtue be at strife :
This, as a ransom, Albemarle did pay,
For all the glories of so great a life.
For now brave Rupert from afar appears,
Whose waving streamers the glad General
knows ;
With full-spread sails his eager navy steers,
And every ship in swift proportion grows.
The anxious Prince had heard the cannon long,
And from that length of time dire omens drew
Of English overmatch'd, and Dutch too strong,
Who never fought three days, but to pursue.
Then, as an eagle, who with pious care
Was beating widely on the wing for prey,
To her now silent eyry does repair,
And finds her callow infants forced away ;
Stung with her love, she stoops upon the plain,
The broken air loud whistling as she flies :
She stops, and listens, and shoots forth again,
And guides her pinions by her young ones' cries.
With such kind passion hastes the Prince to fight,
And spreads his flying canvass to the sound :
Him, whom no danger, were he there, could fright,
Now, absent, every little noise can wound.
As in a drought the thirsty creatures cry,
And gape upon the gather'd clouds for rain ;
And first the martlet meets it in the sky,
And with wet wings joys all the feather'd train.

With such glad hearts did our despairing men
Salute the' appearance of the Prince's fleet :
And each ambitiously would claim the ken,
That with first eyes did distant safety meet.
The Dutch, who came like greedy hinds before,
To reap the harvest their ripe ears did yield,
Now look like those, when rolling thunders roar,
And sheets of lightning blast the standing field.
Full in the Prince's passage hills of sand
And dangerous flats in secret ambush lay,
Where the false tides skim o'er the cover'd land,
And seamen with dissembled depths betray.
The wily Dutch, who, like fallen angels, fear'd
This new Messiah's coming, there did wait;
And round the verge their braving vessels steer'd,
To tempt his courage with so fair a bait.
But he, unmoved, contemns their idle threat,
Secure of fame whene'er he pleased to fight:
His cold experience tempers all his heat,
And inbred worth doth boasting valour slight.
Heroic virtue did his actions guide,
And he the substance not the' appearance chose:
To rescue one such friend he took more pride,
Than to destroy whole thousands of such foes.
But when approach'd, in strict embraces bound,
Rupert and Albemarle together grow :
He joys to have his friend in safety found,
Which he to none but to that friend would owe.
The cheerful soldiers, with new stores supplied,
Now long to execute their spleenful will ;
And, in revenge for those three days they tried,
Wish one, like Joshua's, when the sun stood still.

Thus re-enforced, against the adverse fleet,
Still doubling ours, brave Rupert leads the way:
With the first blushes of the morn they meet,
And bring night back upon the new-born day.

His presence soon blows up the kindling fight,
And his loud guns speak thick like angry men:
It seem'd as slaughter had been breathed all night,
And Death new-pointed his dull dart again.

The Dutch too well his mighty conduct knew,
And matchless courage, since the former fight:
Whose navy still a stiff-stretch'd cord did shew,
Till he bore in, and bent them into flight.

The wind he shares, while half their fleet offends
His open side, and high above him shows:
Upon the rest at pleasure he descends,
And, doubly harm'd, he double harms bestows.

Behind, the General mends his weary pace,
And sullenly to his revenge he sails:
So glides some trodden serpent on the grass,
And long behind his wounded volume trails.

The' increasing sound is borne to either shore,
And for their stakes the throwing nations fear:
Their passions double with the cannons' roar,
And with warm wishes each man combats there.

Plied thick and close as when the fight begun,
Their huge unwieldy navy wastes away:
So sicken waning moons too near the sun,
And blunt their crescents on the edge of day.

And now reduced on equal terms to fight,
Their ships like wasted patrimonies show;
Where the thin scattering trees admit the light,
And shun each other's shadows as they grow.

The warlike Prince had severed from the rest
Two giant ships, the pride of all the main,
Which with his one so vigorously he press'd,
And flew so home, they could not rise again.

Already batter'd, by his lee they lay,
In vain upon the passing winds they call;
The passing winds through their torn canvass play,
And flagging sails on heartless sailors fall.

Their open'd sides receive a gloomy light,
Dreadful as day let into shades below:
Without, grim death rides barefaced in their sight,
And urges entering billows as they flow.

When one dire shot, the last they could supply,
Close by the board the Prince's mainmast bore;
All three, now helpless, by each other lie,
And this offends not, and those fear no more.

So have I seen some fearful hare maintain
A course, till tired before the dog she lay;
Who, stretch'd behind her, pants upon the plain,
Past power to kill, as she to get away.

With his loll'd tongue he faintly licks his prey;
His warm breath blows her flix up as she lies;
She, trembling, creeps upon the ground away,
And looks back to him with beseeching eyes.

The Prince unjustly does his stars accuse,
Which hinder'd him to push his fortune on;
For what they to his courage did refuse,
By mortal valour never must be done.

This lucky hour the wise Batavian takes,
And warns his tatter'd fleet to follow home:
Proud to have so got off with equal stakes,
Where 'twas a triumph not to be o'ercome.

The General's force, as kept alive by fight,
Now, not opposed, no longer can pursue :
Lasting till Heaven had done his courage right ;
When he had conquer'd, he his weakness knew.

He casts a frown on the departing foe,
And sighs to see him quit the watery field :
His stern fix'd eyes no satisfaction show,
For all the glories which the fight did yield.

Though, as when fiends did miracles avow,
He stands confess'd even by the boastful Dutch ;
He only does his conquest disavow,
And thinks too little what they found too much.

Return'd, he with the fleet resolved to stay ;
No tender thoughts of home his heart divide ;
Domestic joys and cares he puts away ; [guide.
For realms are households which the great must

As those who unripe veins in mines explore,
On the rich bed again the warm turf lay,
Till time digests the yet imperfect ore,
And know it will be gold another day :

So looks our Monarch on this early fight,
The' essay and rudiments of great success,
Which all-maturing Time must bring to light,
While he, like Heaven, does each day's labour
bless.

Heaven ended not the first or second day,
Yet each was perfect to the work design'd ;
God and kings' work, when they their works survey,
A passive aptness in all subjects find.

In burden'd vessels, first with speedy care,
His plenteous stores do season'd timber send ;
Thither the brawny carpenters repair,
And, as the surgeons of maim'd ships, attend.

With cord and canvass from rich Hamburg sent,
His navies' molted wings he imps once more ;
Tall Norway fir, their masts in battle spent,
And English oaks sprung leaks and planks restore.

All hands employ'd, the royal work grows warm :
Like labouring bees on a long summer's day,
Some sound the trumpet for the rest to swarm,
And some on bells of tasted lilies play.

With glewy wax some new foundations lay
Of virgin-combs, which from the roof are hung ;
Some arm'd within doors upon duty stay,
Or tend the sick, or educate the young.

So here, some pick out bullets from the sides,
Some drive old oakum through each seam and
Their left hand does the calking iron guide, [rift:
The rattling mallet with the right they lift.

With boiling pitch another near at hand [stops ;
(From friendly Sweden brought) the seams in-
Which, well laid o'er, the salt sea waves withstand,
And shakes them from the rising beak in drops.

Some the gall'd ropes with dawby marling bind,
Orsear-cloth masts with strong tarpauling coats :
To try new shrouds one mounts into the wind,
And one below their ease or stiffness notes.

Our careful Monarch stands in person by,
His new cast cannons' firmness to explore :
The strength of big-corn'd powder loves to try,
And ball and cartridge sorts for every bore.

Each day brings fresh supplies of arms and men,
And ships which all last winter were abroad ;
And such as fitted since the fight had been,
Or new from stocks were fallen into the road.

The goodly London in her gallant trim,
The Phoenix, daughter of the vanish'd old,
Like a rich bride does to the ocean swim,
And on her shadow rides in floating gold.

Her flag aloft spread ruffling to the wind,
And sanguine streamers seem the flood to fire:
The weaver, charm'd with what his loom design'd,
Goes on to sea, and knows not to retire.

With roomy decks; her guns of mighty strength,
Whose low-laid mouths each mounting billow
laves;

Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,
She seems a sea-wasp flying on the waves.

This martial present, piously design'd,
The loyal City give their best-loved King;
And with a bounty ample as the wind,
Built, fitted, and maintain'd, to aid him bring.

By viewing Nature, Nature's hand-maid, Art,
Makes mighty things from small beginnings
Thus fishes first to shipping did impart [grow:
Their tail the rudder, and their head the prow.

Some log, perhaps, upon the waters swam,
An useless drift, which rudely cut within,
And hollow'd, first a floating trough became,
And cross some rivulet passage did begin.

In shipping such as this, the Irish kern
And untaught Indian on the stream did glide,
Ere sharp-keel'd boats to stem the flood did learn,
Or fin-like oars did spread from either side.

Add but a sail, and Saturn so appear'd,
When, from lost empire, he to exile went,
And with the golden age to Tyber steer'd,
Where coin and commerce first he did invent.

Rude as their ships was navigation then ;
No useful compass or meridian known ;
Coasting, they kept the land within their ken,
And knew no north but when the pole-star shone.

Of all who since have used the open sea,
Than the bold English none more fame have won :
Beyond the year, and out of Heaven's high way,
They make discoveries where they see no sun.

But what so long in vain, and yet unknown,
By poor mankind's benighted wit is sought,
Shall in this age to Britain first be shown,
And hence be to admiring nations taught.

The ebbs of tides, and their mysterious flow,
We, as Art's element, shall understand,
And as by line upon the ocean go,
Whose path shall be familiar as the land.

Instructed ships shall sail to quick commerce,
By which remotest regions are allied ;
Which makes one city of the universe,
Where some may gain, and all may be supplied.

Then we upon our globe's last verge shall go,
And view the ocean leaning on the sky ;
From thence our rolling neighbours we shall know,
And on the lunar world securely pry.

This I foretell, from your auspicious care,
Who great in search of God and Nature grow ;
Who best your wise Creator's praise declare,
Since best to praise his works is best to know.

O truly royal ! who behold the law
And rule of beings in your Maker's mind ;
And thence, like limbecs, rich ideas draw,
To fit the levell'd use of human-kind,

But first the toils of war we must endure,
And from the' injurious Dutch redeem the seas :
War makes the valiant of his right secure,
And gives up fraud to be chastised with ease.

Already were the Belgians on our coast,
Whose fleet more mighty every day became
By late success, which they did falsely boast,
And now, by first appearing, seem'd to claim.

Designing, subtle, diligent, and close,
They knew to manage war with wise delay :
Yet all those arts their vanity did cross,
And by their pride their prudence did betray.

Nor staid the English long ; but, well supplied,
Appear as numerous as the' insulting foe ;
The combat now by courage must be tried,
And the success the braver nation show.

There was the Plymouth squadron now come in,
Which in the Straits last winter was abroad :
Which twice on Biscay's working bay had been,
And on the Mid-land sea the French had awed.

Old expert Allen, loyal all along,
Famed for his action on the Smyrna fleet :
And Holmes, whose name shall live in epic song,
While music numbers, or while verse has feet.

Holmes, the Achates of the General's fight ;
Who first bewitch'd our eyes with Guinea gold ;
As once old Cato in the Romans' sight
The tempting fruits of Afric did unfold.

With him went Spragge, as bountiful as brave,
Whom his high courage to command had brought ;
Harman, who did the twice-fired Harry save,
And in his burning ship undaunted fought,

Young Hollis, on a Muse by Mars begot,
Born, Cæsar-like, to write and act great deeds :
Impatient to revenge his fatal shot,
His right hand doubly to his left succeeds.
Thousands were there in darker fame that dwell,
Whose deeds some nobler poem shall adorn :
And, though to me unknown, they, sure, fought well,
Whom Rupert led, and who were British born.
Of every size an hundred fighting sail :
So vast the navy now at anchor rides,
That underneath it the press'd waters fail,
And with its weight it shoulders off the tides.
Now anchors weigh'd, the seamen shout so shrill,
That Heaven and earth and the wide ocean rings :
A breeze from westward waits their sails to fill,
And rests in those high beds his downy wings.
The wary Dutch this gathering storm foresaw,
And durst not bide it on the English coast ;
Behind their treacherous shallows they withdraw,
And there lay snares to catch the British host :
So the false spider, when her nets are spread,
Deep ambush'd in her silent den does lie ;
And feels far off the trembling of her thread,
Whose filmy cord should bind the struggling fly.
Then if, at last, she find him fast beset,
She issues forth, and runs along her loom ;
She joys to touch the captive in her net,
And drag the little wretch in triumph home.
The Belgians hoped that with disorder'd haste,
Our deep-cut keels upon the sands might run ;
Or, if with caution leisurely we pass'd,
Their numerous gross might charge us one by one.

But, with a fore-wind pushing them above,
And swelling tide that heaved them from below,
O'er the blind flats our warlike squadrons move,
And with spread sails to welcome battle go.

It seem'd as there the British Neptune stood,
With all his hosts of waters at command,
Beneath them to submit the' officious flood;
And with his trident shoved them off the sand.

To the pale foes they suddenly draw near,
And summon them to unexpected fight:
They start like murderers when ghosts appear,
And draw their curtains in the dead of night.

Now van to van the foremost squadrons meet,
The midmost battles hastening up behind:
Who view, far off, the storm of falling sleet,
And hear their thunder rattling in the wind.

At length the adverse admirals appear;
The two bold champions of each country's right:
Their eyes describe the lists as they come near,
And draw the lines of death before they fight.

The distance judged for shot of every size,
The linstock stouch, the ponderous ball expires;
The vigorous seaman every port-hole plies,
And adds his heart to every gun he fires.

Fierce was the fight on the proud Belgians' side,
For honour, which they seldom sought before:
But now they by their own vain boasts were tried,
And forced, at least in show, to prize it more.

But sharp remembrance on the English part,
And shame of being match'd by such a foe,
Rouse conscious virtue up in every heart,
And seeming to be stronger makes them so.

Nor long the Belgians could that fleet sustain,
Which did two generals' fates and Cæsar's bear:
Each several ship a victory did gain,
As Rupert or as Albemarle were there.
Their batter'd admiral too soon withdrew,
Unthank'd by ours for his unfinish'd fight:
But he the minds of his Dutch masters knew,
Who call'd that Providence which we call'd Flight.
Never did men more joyfully obey,
Or sooner understood the sign to fly:
With such alacrity they bore away,
As if to praise them all the States stood by.
O famous Leader of the Belgian fleet!
Thy monument inscribed such praise shall wear,
As Varro, timely flying, once did meet,
Because he did not of his Rome despair.
Behold that navy which, a while before,
Provoked the tardy English close to fight,
Now draw their beaten vessels close to shore,
As larks lie dared to shun the hobbies' flight.
Whoe'er would English monuments survey,
In other records may our courage know;
But let them hide the story of this day,
Whose fame was blemish'd by too base a foe.
Or if too busily they will inquire
Into a victory which we disdain,
Then let them know the Belgians did retire
Before the patron saint¹ of injured Spain.
Repenting England this revengeful day
To Philip's² manes did an offering bring;
England, which first, by leading them astray,
Hatch'd up rebellion to destroy her King.

¹ St. James : on whose day this victory was gained.

² Philip II. of Spain.

Our fathers bent their baneful industry
To check a monarchy that slowly grew ;
But did not France or Holland's fate foresee,
Whose rising power to swift dominion flew.
In Fortune's empire blindly thus we go,
And wander after pathless Destiny ;
Whose dark resorts since Prudence cannot know,
In vain it would provide for what shall be.
But whate'er English to the bless'd shall go,
And the fourth Harry or first Orange meet,
Find him disowning of a Bourbon foe,
And him detesting a Batavian fleet.
Now on their coasts our conquering navy rides,
Waylays their merchants, and their land besets ;
Each day new wealth without their care provides ;
They lie asleep with prizes in their nets.
So close behind some promontory lie
The huge leviathans to' attend their prey,
And give no chase, but swallow in the fry [way.
Which through their gaping jaws mistake the
Nor was this all ; in ports and roads remote
Destructive fires among whole fleets we send ;
Triumphant flames upon the waters float,
And outbound ships at home their voyage end.
Those various squadrons variously design'd,
Each vessel freighted with a several load,
Each squadron waiting for a several wind,
All find but one to burn them in the road.
Some bound for Guinea, golden sand to find,
Bore all the gauds the simple natives wear ;
Some for the pride of Turkish courts design'd,
For folded turbans finest holland bear.



Burning of the fleet in the Vlie, by Sir Robert Holmes.

Some English wool, vex'd in a Belgian loom,
And into cloth of spungy softness made,
Did into France or colder Denmark doom,
To ruin with worse ware our staple trade.

Our greedy seamen rummage every hold,
Smile on the booty of each wealthier chest;
And as the priests, who with their gods make bold,
Take what they like, and sacrifice the rest.

But, ah! how unsincere are all our joys! [stay;
Which, sent from Heaven, like lightning make no
Their palling taste the journey's length destroys,
Or Grief, sent post, o'ertakes them on the way.

Swell'd with our late successes on the foe,
Which France and Holland wanted power to
We urge an unseen fate to lay us low, [cross,
And feed their envious eyes with English loss*.

Each element his dread command obeys,
Who makes or ruins with a smile or frown;
Who, as by one he did our nation raise,
So now he with another pulls us down.

Yet London, empress of the Northern clime,
By an high fate thou greatly didst expire;
Great as the world's, which, at the death of Time,
Must fall, and rise a nobler frame by fire.

As when some dire usurper Heaven provides,
To scourge his country with a lawless sway,
His birth, perhaps, some petty village hides,
And sets his cradle out of Fortune's way:

Till, fully ripe, his swelling fate breaks out,
And hurries him to mighty mischiefs on;
His prince, surprised at first, no ill could doubt,
And wants the power to meet it when 'tis known.

* Transition to the Fire of London.

Such was the rise of this prodigious fire,
Which, in mean buildings first obscurely bred,
From thence did soon to open streets aspire,
And straight to palaces and temples spread.

The diligence of Trade, and noiseful Gain,
And Luxury, more late, asleep were laid :
All was the Night's, and, in her silent reign,
No sound the rest of Nature did invade.

In this deep quiet, from what source unknown,
Those seeds of fire their fatal birth disclose ;
And, first, few scattering sparks about were blown,
Big with the flames that to our ruin rose.

Then in some close-pent room it crept along,
And, smouldering as it went, in silence fed :
Till the' infant monster, with devouring strong,
Walk'd boldly upright with exalted head.

Now, like some rich or mighty murderer,
Too great for prison, which he breaks with gold ;
Who fresher for new mischiefs does appear,
And dares the world to tax him with the old :

So 'scapes the' insulting fire his narrow jail,
And makes small outlets into open air ;
There the fierce winds his tender force assail,
And beat him downward to his first repair.

The winds, like crafty courtezans, withheld
His flames from burning, but to blow them more ;
And every fresh attempt he is repell'd
With faint denials, weaker than before.

And now, no longer letted of his prey,
He leaps up at it with enraged desire ;
O'erlooks the neighbours with a wide survey,
And nods at every house his threatening fire.

The ghosts of traitors from the bridge descend,
With bold fanatic spectres to rejoice ;
About the fire into a dance they bend,
And sing their sabbath notes with feeble voice.

Our guardian angel saw them where they sate
Above the palace of our slumbering King :
He sigh'd, abandoning his charge to Fate,
And, drooping, oft look'd back upon the wing.

At length the crackling noise and dreadful blaze
Call'd up some waking lover to the sight ;
And long it was ere he the rest could raise,
Whose heavy eyelids yet were full of night.

The next to danger, hot pursued by Fate,
Half-clothed, half-naked, hastily retire ;
And frighted mothers strike their breasts, too late,
For helpless infants left amidst the fire.

Their cries soon waken all the dwellers near ;
Now murmuring noises rise in every street :
The more remote run stumbling with their fear,
And, in the dark, men jostle as they meet.

So weary bees in little cells repose ;
But if night-robbers lift the well-stored hive,
An humming through their waxen city grows,
And out upon each other's wings they drive.

Now streets grow throng'd and busy as by day :
Some run for buckets to the hallow'd quire ;
Some cut the pipes, and some the engines play,
And some, more bold, mount ladders to the fire.

In vain : for from the east a Belgian wind
His hostile breath through the dry rafters sent ;
The flames, impell'd, soon left their foes behind,
And forward, with a wanton fury, went.

A key of fire ran all along the shore,
And lighten'd all the river with a blaze;
That waken'd tides began again to roar,
And wondering fish in shining waters gaze.

Old Father Thames raised up his reverend head,
But fear'd the fate of Simois would return;
Deep in his ooze he sought his sedgy bed,
And shrunk his waters back into his urn.

The fire, meantime, walks in a broader gross;
To either hand his wings he opens wide;
He wades the streets, and straight he reaches cross,
And plays his longing flames on the' other side.

At first they warm, then scorch, and then they take;
Nor with long necks from side to side they feed;
At length, grown strong, their mother fire forsake,
And a new colony of flames succeed.

To every nobler portion of the Town
The curling billows roll their restless tide;
In parties now they straggle up and down,
As armies, unopposed, for prey divide.

One mighty squadron, with a side-wind sped,
Through narrow lanes his cumber'd fire does
By powerful charms of gold and silver led, [haste,
The Lombard bankers and the 'Change to waste.

Another backward to the Tower would go,
And slowly eats his way against the wind;
But the main body of the marching foe
Against the' imperial palace is design'd.

Now day appears, and with the day the King,
Whose early care had robb'd him of his rest;
Far off the cracks of falling houses ring,
And shrieks of subjects pierce his tender breast.

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Near as he draws, thick harbingers of smoke,
With gloomy pillars, cover all the place,
Whose little intervals of night are broke
By sparks that drive against his sacred face.

More than his guards his sorrows made him known,
And pious tears which down his cheeks did
shower :

The wretched in his grief forgot their own ;
So much the pity of a king has power.

He wept the flames of what he loved so well,
And what so well had merited his love ;
For never prince in grace did more excel,
Or royal city more in duty strove.

Nor with an idle care did he behold ;
(Subjects may grieve, but monarchs must redress)
He cheers the fearful and commends the bold,
And makes despairers hope for good success.

Himself directs what first is to be done,
And orders all the succours which they bring :
The helpful and the good about him run,
And form an army worthy such a king.

He sees the dire contagion spread so fast,
That, where it seizes, all relief is vain ;
And therefore must unwillingly lay waste
That country which would else the foe maintain.

The powder blows up all before the fire :
The' amazed flames stand gather'd on a heap :
And from the precipice's brink retire,
Afraid to venture on so large a leap.

Thus fighting fires a while themselves consume,
But straight, like Turks, forced on to win or die,
They first lay tender bridges of their fume,
And o'er the breach in unctuous vapours fly.

Part stay for passage, till a gust of wind
Ships o'er their forces in a shining sheet;
Part creeping under ground their journey blind,
And climbing from below, their fellows meet.
Thus to some desert plain, or old wood side,
Dire night-hags come from far to dance their
round;
And o'er broad rivers on their fiends they ride,
Or sweep in clouds above the blasted ground.
No help avails; for, hydra-like, the fire
Lifts up his hundred heads to aim his way;
And scarce the wealthy can one half retire
Before he rushes in to share the prey.
The rich grow suppliant, and the poor grow proud;
Those offer mighty gain, and these ask more;
So void of pity is the ignoble crowd,
When others' ruin may increase their store.
As those who live by shores with joy behold
Some wealthy vessel split or stranded nigh,
And from the rocks leap down for shipwreck'd gold,
And seek the tempests which the others fly:
So these but wait the owners' last despair,
And what's permitted to the flames invade;
E'en from their jaws the hungry morsels tear,
And on their backs the spoils of Vulcan lade.
The days were all in this lost labour spent;
And when the weary King gave place to night,
His beams he to his royal brother lent,
And so shone still in his reflective light.
Night came, but without darkness or repose,
A dismal picture of the general doom;
Where souls distracted, when the trumpet blows,
And half unready, with their bodies come.

Those who have homes, when home they do repair,
To a last lodging call their wandering friends :
Their short uneasy sleeps are broke with care,
To look how near their own destruction tends.

Those who have none, sit round where once it was,
And with full eyes each wonted room require ;
Haunting the yet warm ashes of the place,
As murder'd men walk where they did expire.

Some stir up coals, and watch the vestal fire,
Others in vain from sight of ruin run ;
And, while through burning labyrinths they retire,
With loathing eyes repeat what they would shun.

The most in fields, like herded beasts, lie down,
To dews obnoxious, on the grassy floor ;
And, while their babes in sleep their sorrows drown,
Sad parents watch the remnants of their store.

While by the motion of the flames they guess
What streets are burning now, and what are near,
An infant, waking, to the paps would press,
And meets, instead of milk, a falling tear.

No thought can ease them but their Sovereign's care,
Whose praise the' afflicted as their comfort sing :
E'en those, whom want might drive to just despair,
Think life's a blessing under such a King.

Meantime he sadly suffers in their grief,
Outweeps an hermit, and outprays a saint ;
All the long night he studies their relief,
How they may be supplied and he may want.

' O God ! (said he) thou patron of my days,
Guide of my youth in exile and distress !
Who me unfriended brought'st, by wondrous ways,
The kingdom of my fathers to possess :

' Be thou my judge with what unwearied care
I since have labour'd for my people's good ;

ruises of a Civil war,
ie issues of their wasting blood!

ast taught me to forgive the ill,
sense, as friends, the good misled;
precept of thy will,
mercy on thy servant's head.

lless youth has stepp'd astray,
getful of thy gracious hand ;
y just displeasure lay,
udgments from this mourningland.

nn'd, and thou hast laid us low
th, from whence at first we came :
as before the clouds we show,
e parchment in consuming flame.

gh what thou hast done [street,
deaths ran arm'd through every
ts, which not the good could shun,
ld outfly, or valiant meet.

nd frequent funerals then,
wrath on this forsaken place ;
r, who are return'd again,
lgments to their dwellings trace.

an absolute decree,
nce unconditional ;
our remorse foresee,
ight, this thy doom recall.

ord, as thine, thou mayst re-
nd fix'd they stand, [voke ;
to give the stroke,
foes oppress thy land.'



DRYDEN.
An infant, waking, to the paps would press,
And meets, instead of milk, a falling tear.
Vol. I. Annot. Mouton, 1717.



The' Eternal heard, and from the heavenly choir
Chose out the cherub with the flaming sword ;
And bade him swiftly drive the' approaching fire
From where our naval magazines were stored.

The blessed minister his wings display'd,
And, like a shooting star, he cleft the night :
He charged the flames, and those that disobey'd
He lash'd to duty with his sword of light.

The fugitive flames, chastised, went forth to prey
On pious structures, by our fathers rear'd ;
By which to Heaven they did affect the way,
Ere faith in churchmen without works was heard.

The wanting orphans saw, with watery eyes,
Their founders' charity in dust laid low ;
And sent to God their ever-answer'd cries ;
For he protects the poor who made them so.

Nor could thy fabric, Paul, defend thee long,
Though thou wert sacred to thy Maker's praise :
Though made immortal by a poet's song ;
And poets' songs the Theban walls could raise.

The daring flames peep'd in, and saw from far
The awful beauties of the sacred quire ;
But since it was profaned by civil war,
Heaven thought it fit to have it purged by fire.

Now down the narrow streets it swiftly came,
And, widely opening, did on both sides prey ;
This benefit we sadly owe the flame,
If only ruin must enlarge our way.

And now four days the sun had seen our woes,
Four nights the moon beheld the' incessant fire ;
It seem'd as if the stars more sickly rose,
And farther from the feverish North retire.

In the' empyrean Heaven, the bless'd abode,
The Thrones and the Dominions prostrate lie,
Not daring to behold their angry God;
And an hush'd silence damps the tuneful sky.

At length the' Almighty cast a pitying eye,
And mercy softly touch'd his melting breast;
He saw the Town's one half in rubbish lie,
And eager flames drive on to storm the rest.

An hollow crystal pyramid he takes,
In firmamental waters dipp'd above;
Of it a broad extinguisher he makes,
And hoods the flames that to their quarry strove.

The vanquish'd fires withdraw from every place,
Or, full with feeding, sink into a sleep:
Each household genius shows again his face,
And from the hearths the little Lares creep.

Our King this more than natural change beholds;
With sober joy his heart and eyes abound:
To the All-good his lifted hands he folds,
And thanks him low on his redeemed ground.

As when sharp frosts had long constrain'd the earth,
A kindly thaw unlocks it with cold rain;
And first the tender blade peeps up to birth,
And straight the green fields laugh with promised grain.

By such degrees the spreading gladness grew
In every heart which fear had froze before:
The standing streets with so much joy they view,
That with less grief the perish'd they deplore.

The Father of the people open'd wide
His stores, and all the poor with plenty fed:
Thus God's anointed God's own place supplied,
And fill'd the empty with his daily bread.

This royal bounty brought its own reward,
And in their minds so deep did print the sense,
That if their ruins sadly they regard,
 'Tis but with fear the sight might drive him thence.

But so may he live long that Town to sway,
 Which by his auspice they will nobler make,
As he will hatch their ashes by his stay,
 And not their humble ruins now forsake.

They have not lost their loyalty by fire ;
 Nor is their courage or their wealth so low,
That from his wars they poorly would retire,
 Or beg the pity of a vanquish'd foe.

Not with more constancy the Jews of old,
 By Cyrus from rewarded exile sent,
Their royal city did in dust behold,
 Or with more vigour to rebuild it went.

The utmost malice of the stars is pass'd, [Town,
 And two dire comets, which have scourged the
In their own plague and fire have breathed their last,
 Or, dimly, in their sinking sockets frown.

Now frequent trines the happier lights among,
 And high-raised Jove from his dark prison freed,
(Those weights took off that on his planet hung)
 Will gloriously the new-laid works succeed.

Methinks already, from this chemic flame,
 I see a city of more precious mould :
Rich as the town^s which gives the Indies name,
 With silver paved, and all divine with gold.

Already, labouring with a mighty fate,
 She shakes the rubbish from her mounting brow,
And seems to have renew'd her charter's date,
 Which Heaven will to the death of Time allow.

^s Mexico.

More great than human, now, and more august,
New deified she from her fires does rise ;
Her widening streets on new foundations trust,
And, opening, into larger parts she flies.
Before, she like some shepherdess did show,
Who sat to bathe her by a river's side ;
Not answering to her fame, but rude and low,
Nor taught the beauteous arts of modern pride.
Now, like a maiden queen, she will behold,
From her high turrets, hourly suitors come :
The East with incense, and the West with gold,
Will stand, like suppliants, to receive their doom.
The silent Thames, her own domestic flood,
Shall bear her vessels, like a sweeping train ;
And often wind, as of his mistress proud,
With longing eyes to meet her face again.
The wealthy Tagus, and the wealthier Rhine,
The glory of their towns no more shall boast,
And Seine, that would with Belgian rivers join,
Shall find her lustre stain'd, and traffic lost.
The venturous merchant, who design'd more far,
And touches on our hospitable shore,
Charm'd with the splendour of this northern star,
Shall here unlade him, and depart no more.
Our powerful navy shall no longer meet
The wealth of France or Holland to invade ;
The Beauty of this Town, without a fleet,
From all the world shall vindicate her trade.
And while this famed emporium we prepare,
The British ocean shall such triumphs boast,
That those who now disdain our trade to share,
Shall rob, like pirates, on our wealthy coast.

Already we have conquer'd half the war,
And the less dangerous part is left behind;
Our trouble now is but to make them dare,
And not so great to vanquish as to find.

Thus to the eastern wealth through storms we go,
But now, the Cape once doubled, fear no more;
A constant trade-wind will securely blow,
And gently lay us on the spicy shore.



AN ESSAY UPON SATIRE.

BY

MR. DRYDEN AND THE EARL OF MULGRAVE.

1679.

How dull and how insensible a beast
 Is man, who yet would lord it o'er the rest !
 Philosophers and poets vainly strove,
 In every age, the lumpish mass to move ;
 But those were pedants, when compared with these,
 Who know not only to instruct, but please.
 Poets alone found the delightful way
 Mysterious morals gently to convey
 In charming numbers ; so that as men grew
 Pleased with their poems, they grew wiser too.
 Satire has always shone among the rest,
 And is the boldest way, if not the best,
 To tell men freely of their foulest faults,
 To laugh at their vain deeds, and vainer thoughts,
 In satire, too, the wise took different ways,
 To each deserving its peculiar praise.
 Some did all folly with just sharpness blame,
 Whilst others laugh'd and scorn'd them into shame.
 But of these two the last succeeded best,
 As men aim rightest when they shoot in jest.
 Yet, if we may presume to blame our guides,
 And censure those who censure all besides,
 In other things they justly are preferr'd ;
 In this alone, methinks, the ancients err'd ;
 Against the grossest follies they declaim ;
 Hard they pursue, but hunt ignoble game.

Nothing is easier than such blots to hit,
And 'tis the talent of each vulgar wit :
Besides, 'tis labour lost ; for who would preach
Morals to Armstrong, or dull Aston teach ?
'Tis being devout at play, wise at a ball,
Or bringing wit and friendship to Whitehall.
But with sharp eyes those nicer faults to find,
Which lie obscurely in the wisest mind ;
That little speck, which all the rest does spoil,
To wash off that would be a noble toil ;
Beyond the loose-writ libels of this age,
Or the forced scenes of our declining stage :
Above all censure, too, each little wit
Will be so glad to see the greater hit,
Who judging better, though concern'd the most,
Of such correction will have cause to boast.
In such a satire all would seek a share,
And every fool will fancy he is there.
Old story-tellers, too, must pine and die,
To see their antiquated wit laid by ;
Like her who miss'd her name in a lampoon,
And grieved to find herself decay'd so soon.
No common coxcomb must be mention'd here,
Nor the dull train of dancing sparks appear,
Nor fluttering officers who never fight :
Of such a wretched rabble who would write ?
Much less half wits : that's more against our rules ;
For they are fops, the others are but fools.
Who would not be as silly as Dunbar,
As dull as Monmouth, rather than Sir Carr¹ ?
The cunning courtier should be slighted too,
Who with dull knavery makes so much ado ;

¹ Probably Sir Carr Scrope.

Till the shrewd fool, by thriving too, too fast,
Like Æsop's fox, becomes a prey at last.
Nor shall the royal mistresses be named,
Too ugly, or too easy, to be blamed ;
With whom each rhyming fool keeps such a pother,
They are as common that way as the other :
Yet sauntering Charles, between his beastly brace,
Meets with dissembling still in either place,
Affected humour, or a painted face.
In loyal libels we have often told him
How one has jilted him, the other sold him ;
How that affects to laugh, how this to weep ;
But who can rail so long as he can sleep ?
Was ever prince by two at once misled,
False, foolish, old, ill-natured, and ill-bred ?
Earnly², and Aylesbury, with all that race
Of busy blockheads, shall have here no place ;
At council set, as foils on Dorset's score,
To make that great false jewel shine the more ;
Who all that while was thought exceeding wise,
Only for taking pains and telling lies.
But there's no meddling with such nauseous men ;
Their very names have tired my lazy pen :
'Tis time to quit this company, and choose
Some fitter subject for a sharper muse.

First, let's behold the metriest man alive
Against his careless genius vainly strive ;
Quit his dear ease, some deep design to lay
'Gainst a set time, and then forget the day :
Yet he will laugh at his best friends, and be
Just as good company as Nokes and Lee :

² Probably Sir John Earnly, chancellor of the exchequer, in the latter part of the reign of Charles II.

But when he aims at reason or at rule,
He turns himself the best to ridicule.
Let him at business ne'er so earnest sit,
Show him but mirth, and bait that mirth with wit,
That shadow of a jest shall be enjoy'd,
Though he left all mankind to be destroy'd.
So cat, transform'd, sat gravely and demure,
Till mouse appear'd and thought himself secure ;
But soon the lady had him in her eye,
And from her friend did just as oddly fly.
Reaching above our nature does no good ;
We must fall back to our old flesh and blood :
As by our little Machiavel we find,
That nimblest creature of the busy kind ;
His limbs are crippled, and his body shakes,
Yet his hard mind, which all this bustle makes,
No pity of its poor companion takes.
What gravity can hold from laughing out,
To see him drag his feeble legs about,
Like hounds ill-coupled ? Jowler lugs him still
Through hedges, ditches, and through all that's ill.
'Twere crime in any man, but him alone,
To use a body so, though 'tis one's own :
Yet this false comfort never gives him o'er, [soar :
That whilst he creeps, his vigorous thoughts can
Alas ! that soaring, to those few that know,
Is but a busy grovelling here below.
So men in rapture think they mount the sky,
Whilst on the ground the' entranced wretches lie :
So modern fops have fancied they could fly.
As the new earl, with parts deserving praise,
And wit enough to laugh at his own ways,
Yet loses all soft days and sensual nights,
Kind Nature checks, and kinder Fortune slights ;

Striving against his quiet all he can,
For the fine notion of a busy man.
And what is that at best, but one whose mind
Is made to tire himself and all mankind?
For Ireland he would go; faith, let him reign;
For if some odd fantastic lord would fain
Carry in trunks, and all my drudgery do,
I'll not only pay him, but admire him too.
But is there any other beast that lives
Who his own harm so wittingly contrives?
Will any dog that has his teeth and stones,
Refinedly leave his bitches and his bones
To turn a wheel, and bark to be employ'd,
While Venus is by rival dogs enjoy'd?
Yet this fond man, to get a statesman's name,
Forfeits his friends, his freedom, and his fame.
Though satire, nicely writ with humour, stings
But those who merit praise in other things;
Yet we must needs this one exception make,
And break our rules for Folly Tropos' sake;
Who was too much despised to be accused,
And therefore scarce deserves to be abused:
Raised only by his mercenary tongue,
For railing smoothly, and for reasoning wrong.
As boys, on holidays let loose to play,
Lay waggish traps for girls that pass that way,
Then shout to see in dirt and deep distress,
Some silly cit in her flower'd foolish dress;
So have I mighty satisfaction found
To see his tinsel reason on the ground:
To see the florid fool despised, and know it,
By some who scarce have words enough to show it:
For Sense sits silent, and condemns for weaker
The finer, nay, sometimes, the wittiest speaker.

But 'tis prodigious, so much eloquence
Should be acquired by such little sense ;
For words and wit did anciently agree,
And Tully was no fool, though this man be :
At bar abusive, on the bench unable,
Knaave on the woolsack, fop at council-table.
These are the grievances of such fools as would
Be rather wise than honest, great than good.

Some other kind of wits must be made known,
Whose harmless errors hurt themselves alone ;
Excess of luxury they think can please,
And laziness call loving of their ease :
They live dissolved in pleasures still they feign,
Though their whole life's but intermitting pain :
So much of surfeits, headaches, claps, are seen,
We scarce perceive the little time between :
Well-meaning men, who make this gross mistake,
And pleasure lose, only for pleasure's sake.
Each pleasure has its price, and when we pay
Too much of pain, we squander life away.

Thus Dorset, purring like a thoughtful cat,
Married, but wiser puss ne'er thought of that :
And first he worried her with railing rhyme,
Like Pembroke's mastives, at his kindest time ;
Then for one night sold all his slavish life,
A teeming widow, but a barren wife.
Swell'd by contact of such a fulsome toad,
He lugg'd about the matrimonial load,
Till Fortune, blindly kind, as well as he,
Has ill-restored him to his liberty ;
Which he would use in his old sneaking way,
Drinking all night, and dozing all the day ;
Dull as Ned Howard, whom his brisker times
Had famed for dulness in malicious rhymes.

Mulgrave had much ado to 'scape the snare,
Though learn'd in all those arts that cheat the fair;
For after all his vulgar marriage mocks,
With beauty dazzled, Numps was in the stocks;
Deluded parents dried their weeping eyes,
To see him catch his tartar for his prize;
The' impatient Town waited the wish'd-for change,
And cuckolds smiled in hopes of sweet revenge;
Till Petworth plot made us with sorrow see,
As his estate, his person, too, was free:
Him no soft thoughts, no gratitude, could move;
To gold he fled from beauty and from love;
Yet failing there, he keeps his freedom still,
Forced to live happily against his will.
'Tis not his fault if too much wealth and power
Break not his boasted quiet every hour.

And little Sid³, for simile renown'd,
Pleasure has always sought, but never found:
Though all his thoughts on wine and women fall,
His are so bad, sure he ne'er thinks at all.
The flesh he lives upon is rank and strong;
His meat and mistresses are kept too long:
But sure we all mistake this pious man,
Who mortifies his person all he can;
What we uncharitably take for sin,
Are only rules of this odd capuchin;
For never hermit, under grave pretence,
Has lived more contrary to common sense;
And 'tis a miracle we may suppose,
No nastiness offends his skilful nose;
Which from all stink can, with peculiar art,
Extract perfume and essence from a fart:

³ Sidney Godolphin probably.

Expecting supper is his great delight ;
He toils all day but to be drunk at night ;
Then o'er his cups this night-bird chirping sits,
Till he takes Hewet⁴ and Jack Hall⁵ for wits.

Rochester I despise for want of wit,
Though thought to have a tail and cloven feet ;
For while he mischief means to all mankind,
Himself alone the ill effects does find :
And so, like witches, justly suffers shame,
Whose harmless malice is so much the same.
False are his words, affected is his wit ;
So often he does aim, so seldom hit ;
To every face he cringes while he speaks,
But when the back is turn'd, the head he breaks ;
Mean in each action, lewd in every limb,
Manners themselves are mischievous in him :
A proof that Chance alone makes every creature,
A very Killigrew, without good nature.
For what a Bessus has he always lived,
And his own kickings notably contrived !
For, there's the folly that's still mix'd with fear,
Cowards more blows than any hero bear ;
Of fighting sparks some may their pleasures say,
But 'tis a bolder thing to run away :
The world may well forgive him all his ill,
For every fault does prove his penance still :
Falsely he falls into some dangerous noose,
And then as meanly labours to get loose.
A life so infamous is better quitting,
Spent in base injury and low submitting.

⁴ Probably Sir George, who was called beau Hewet. See *Censura Literaria*, vol. i. p. 174.

⁵ Perhaps Jacob Hall, the famous rope-dancer. See Granger.

I'd like to have left out his poetry,
 Forgot by all almost as well as me.
 Sometimes he has some humour, never wit,
 And if it rarely, very rarely, hit,
 'Tis under so much nasty rubbish laid,
 To find it out 's the cinder-woman's trade,
 Who for the wretched remnants of a fire,
 Must toil all day in ashes and in mire.
 So lewdly dull his idle works appear,
 The wretched texts deserve no comments here;
 Where one poor thought sometimes, left all alone,
 For a whole page of dulness must atone.

How vain a thing is Man, and how unwise !
 E'en he, who would himself the most despise !
 I, who so wise and humble seem to be,
 Now my own vanity and pride can't see.
 While the world's nonsense is so sharply shown,
 We pull down others but to raise our own:
 That we may angels seem, we paint them elves,
 And are but satires to set up ourselves.
 I, who have all this while been finding fault,
 E'en with my master, who first satire taught,
 And did by that describe the task so hard,
 It seems stupendous, and above reward;
 Now labour, with unequal force to climb
 That lofty hill unreach'd by former time :
 'Tis just that I should to the bottom fall,
 Learn to write well, or not to write at all,

RELIGIO LAICI;
OR,
A LAYMAN'S FAITH.

An Epistle.

1682.

THE PREFACE.

A POEM with so bold a title, and a name prefixed, from which the handling of so serious a subject would not be expected, may reasonably oblige the Author to say somewhat in defence both of himself and of his undertaking. In the first place, if it be objected to me, that being a layman, I ought not to have concerned myself with speculations which belong to the profession of divinity; I could answer, that, perhaps, laymen, with equal advantages of parts and knowledge, are not the most incompetent judges of sacred things. But, in the due sense of my own weakness and want of learning, I plead not this; I pretend not to make myself a judge of faith in others, but only to make a confession of my own. I lay no unhallowed hand upon the ark; but wait on it, with the reverence that becomes me, at a distance. In the next place, I will ingenuously confess, that the helps I have used in this small treatise were many of them taken from the works

of our own reverend divines of the church of England: so that the weapons with which I combat irreligion are already consecrated; though, I suppose, they may be taken down as lawfully as the sword of Goliath was by David, when they are to be employed for the common cause against the enemies of piety. I intend not by this to entitle them to any of my errors; which yet, I hope, are only those of charity to mankind; and such as my *own* charity has caused me to commit, that of *others* may more easily excuse.

Being naturally inclined to scepticism in philosophy, I have no reason to impose my opinions in a subject which is above it: but, whatever they are, I submit them with all reverence to my Mother-church, accounting them no farther mine than as they are authorized, or at least uncondemned, by her. And, indeed, to secure myself on this side, I have used the necessary precaution of showing this paper before it was published to a judicious and learned friend, a man indefatigably zealous in the service of the Church and State, and whose writings have highly deserved of both. He was pleased to approve the body of the discourse, and I hope he is more my friend than to do it out of complaisance. 'Tis true, he had too good a taste to like it all; and amongst some other faults, recommended to my second view what I have written, perhaps too boldly, on St. Athanasius, which he advised me wholly to omit. I am sensible enough that I had done more prudently to have followed his opinion; but then I could not have satisfied myself that I had done honestly, not to have written what was my own.

It has always been my thought that heathens, who never did, nor without miracle could, hear of the name of Christ, were yet in a possibility of salvation. Neither will it enter easily into my belief, that, before the coming of our Saviour, the whole world, excepting only the Jewish nation, should lie under the inevitable necessity of everlasting punishment, for want of that revelation which was confined to so small a spot of ground as that of Palestine. Among the sons of Noah we read of one only who was accursed; and if a blessing in the ripeness of time was reserved for Japheth, (of whose progeny we are) it seems unaccountable to me why so many generations, of the same offspring, as preceded our Saviour in the flesh, should be all involved in one common condemnation, and yet that their posterity should be entitled to the hopes of salvation: as if a bill of exclusion had passed only on the fathers, which debarred not the sons from their succession; or that so many ages had been delivered over to hell, and so many reserved for heaven; and that the devil had the first choice, and God the next. Truly, I am apt to think, that the revealed religion which was taught by Noah to all his sons might continue for some ages in the whole posterity: that afterwards it was included wholly in the family of Shem is manifest; but when the progenies of Cham and Japheth swarmed into colonies, and those colonies were subdivided into many others, in process of time their descendants lost, by little and little, the primitive and purer rites of divine worship, retaining only the notion of one deity; to which

succeeding generations added others: for men took their degrees in those ages from conquerors to gods. Revelation being thus eclipsed to almost all mankind, the light of nature, as the next in dignity, was substituted; and that is it which St. Paul concludes to be the rule of the heathens, and by which they are hereafter to be judged.

If my supposition be true, then the consequence which I have assumed in my Poem may be also true; namely, that Deism, or the principles of natural worship, are only the faint remnants or dying flames of revealed religion in the posterity of Noah; and that our modern philosophers, nay, and some of our philosophizing divines, have too much exalted the faculties of our souls, when they have maintained that, by their force, mankind has been able to find out that there is one supreme Agent, or intellectual Being, which we call God; that praise and prayer are his due worship; and the rest of those deducements, which I am confident are the remote effects of revelation, and unattainable by our discourse, I mean as simply considered, and without the benefit of divine illumination: so that we have not lifted up ourselves to God by the weak pinions of our reason, but he has been pleased to descend to us; and what Socrates said of him, what Plato writ, and the rest of the Heathen philosophers of several nations, is all no more than the twilight of revelation, after the sun of it was set in the race of Noah. That there is something above us, some principle of motion, our reason can apprehend, though it cannot discover what it is by its own virtue. And indeed it is very improbable

that we, who by the strength of our faculties cannot enter into the knowledge of any being, not so much as of our own, should be able to find out by them that Supreme Nature which we cannot otherwise define than by saying it is Infinite; as if infinite were definable, or infinity a subject for our narrow understanding. They who would prove religion by reason do but weaken the cause which they endeavour to support: it is to take away the pillars from our faith, and prop it only with a twig; it is to design a tower like that of Babel, which, if it were possible (as it is not) to reach Heaven, would come to nothing by the confusion of the workmen: for every man is building a several way, impotently conceited of his own model and his own materials. Reason is always striving, and always at a loss; and of necessity it must so come to pass, while it is exercised about that which is not its proper object. Let us be content at last to know God by his own methods; at least so much of him as he is pleased to reveal to us in the sacred Scriptures: to apprehend them to be the word of God is all our reason has to do; for all beyond it is the work of faith, which is the seal of Heaven impressed upon our human understanding.

And now for what concerns the holy Bishop Athanasius, the preface of whose Creed seems inconsistent with my opinion, which is, that Heathens may possibly be saved. In the first place, I desire it may be considered that it is the Preface only, not the Creed itself, which (till I am better informed) is of too hard a digestion for my charity. 'Tis not that I am ignorant how many

several texts of Scripture seemingly support that cause; but neither am I ignorant how all those texts may receive a kinder and more mollified interpretation. Every man, who is read in church-history, knows *that* belief was drawn up after a long contestation with Arius concerning the divinity of our blessed Saviour, and his being one substance with the Father; and that, thus compiled, it was sent abroad among the Christian churches, as a kind of test, which whosoever took was looked upon as an orthodox believer. 'Tis manifest from hence that the heathen part of the empire was not concerned in it; for its business was not to distinguish betwixt Pagans and Christians, but betwixt heretics and true believers. This, well considered, takes off the heavy weight of censure which I would willingly avoid from so venerable a man; for if this proposition, 'Whosoever will be saved,' be restrained only to those to whom it was intended, and for whom it was composed, I mean the Christians; then the *anathema* reaches not the heathens, who had never heard of Christ, and were nothing interested in that dispute. After all, I am far from blaming even that prefatory addition to the Creed, and as far from caviling at the continuation of it in the Liturgy of the church, where, on the days appointed, it is publicly read: for, I suppose, there is the same reason for it now, in opposition to the Socinians, as there was then against the Arians; the one being a heresy which seems to have been refined out of the other; and with how much more plausibility of reason it combats our religion, with so much more caution it ought

to be avoided: therefore the prudence of our church is to be commended, which has interposed her authority for the recommendation of this Creed. Yet to such as are grounded in the true belief, those explanatory creeds, the Nicene, and this of Athanasius, might perhaps be spared: for what is supernatural will always be a mystery in spite of exposition: and, for my own part, the plain Apostles' Creed is most suitable to my weak understanding; as the simplest diet is the most easy of digestion.

I have dwelt longer on this subject than I intended, and longer than, perhaps, I ought; for having laid down, as my foundation, that the Scripture is a rule; that in all things needful to salvation it is clear, sufficient, and ordained by God Almighty for that purpose, I have left myself no right to interpret obscure places, such as concern the possibility of eternal happiness to heathens; because whatsoever is obscure is concluded not necessary to be known.

But, by asserting the Scripture to be the canon of our faith, I have unavoidably created to myself two sorts of enemies: the Papists, indeed, more directly, because they have kept the Scripture from us, what they could, and have reserved to themselves a right of interpreting what they have delivered, under the pretence of infallibility; and the Fanatics more collaterally, because they have assumed what amounts to an infallibility, in the private spirit; and have detorted those texts of Scripture, which are not necessary to salvation, to the damnable uses of sedition, disturbance, and destruction of the civil government.

To begin with the Papists; and, to speak freely, I think them the less dangerous (at least in appearance) to our present state; for not only the penal laws are in force against them, and their number is contemptible, but also their peers and commons are excluded from Parliament, and, consequently, those laws in no probability of being repealed. A general and uninterrupted plot of their clergy, ever since the Reformation, I suppose all Protestants believe: for it is not reasonable to think but that so many of their orders, as were outed from their fat possessions, would endeavour a re-entrance against those whom they account heretics. As for the late design, Mr. Coleman's letters¹, for aught I know, are the best evidence; and what they discover, without wire-drawing their sense or malicious glosses, all men of reason conclude credible. If there be any thing more than this required of me, I must believe it as well as I am able, in spite of the witnesses, and out of a decent conformity to the votes of Parliament; for I suppose the Fanatics will not allow the private spirit in this case. Here the infallibility is at least in one part of the government, and our understandings as well as our wills are represented. But to return to the Roman Catholics; how can we be secure from the practice of the Jesuited Papists in that religion? For not two or three of that order, as some of them would impose upon us, but almost

¹ Mr. Coleman was secretary to the Duke of York. His letters were addressed to Father La Chaise, the French king's confessor, and his object in writing them appears to have been, the introduction of popery into England. *See Malone's Dryden*, ii. 318.

the whole body of them are of opinion, that their infallible master has a right over kings, not only in spirituals but temporals. Not to name Mariana, Bellarmine, Emanuel Sa, Molina, Santarel, Simancha, and at least twenty others of foreign countries, we can produce of our own nation Campian, and Doleman or Parsons, (besides many are named whom I have not read) who all of them attest this doctrine, that the Pope can depose and give away the right of any sovereign prince, *si vel paulum deflexerit*, if he shall never so little warp: but if he once comes to be excommunicated, then the bond of obedience is taken off from subjects; and they may and ought to drive him, like another Nebuchadnezzar, *ex hominum Christianorum dominatu*, from exercising dominion over Christians; and to this they are bound by virtue of divine precept, and by all the ties of conscience, under no less penalty than damnation. If they answer me (as a learned priest has lately written) that this doctrine of the Jesuits is not *de fide*, and that, consequently, they are not obliged by it, they must pardon me if I think they have said nothing to the purpose; for it is a maxim in their church, where points of faith are not decided, and that doctors are of contrary opinions, they may follow which part they please, but more safely the most received and most authorized: and their champion Bellarmine has told the world, in his Apology, that the King of England is a vassal to the Pope, *ratione directi dominii*, and that he holds in villanage of his Roman landlord; which is no new claim put in for England. Our chronicles are his authentic

witnesses, that King John was deposed by the same plea, and Philip Augustus admitted tenant. And (which makes the more for Bellarmine) the French king was again ejected, when our king submitted to the church, and the crown was received under the sordid condition of a vassalage.

It is not sufficient for the more moderate and well-meaning Papists (of which I doubt not there are many) to produce the evidences of their loyalty to the late King, and to declare their innocence in this plot. I will grant their behaviour, in the first, to have been as loyal and as brave as they desire; and will be willing to hold them excused as to the second, I mean, when it comes to my turn, and after my betters; for it is a madness to be sober alone while the nation continues drunk. But that saying of their father Cres.² is still running in my head, that they may be dispensed with in their obedience to an heretic prince, while the necessity of the times shall oblige them to it; for that (as another of them tell us) is only the effect of Christian prudence: but when once they shall get power to shake him off, an heretic is no lawful king; and, consequently, to rise against him is no rebellion. I should be glad, therefore, that they would follow the advice which was charitably given them by a reverend prelate of our church, namely, that they would join in a public act of disowning and detesting those Jesuitic principles; and subscribe to all doctrines which deny the Pope's authority of deposing kings, and releasing subjects from their oath of allegiance; to which I should think

² Cressy.

they might easily be induced, if it be true that this present Pope has condemned the doctrine of king-killing (a thesis of the Jesuits) maintained amongst others, *ex cathedra*, (as they call it) or in open consistory.

Leaving them, therefore, in so fair a way (if they please themselves) of satisfying all reasonable men of their sincerity and good meaning to the government, I shall make bold to consider that other extreme of our religion, I mean the Fanatics, or Schismatics, of the English church. Since the Bible has been translated into our tongue, they have used it so, as if their business was not to be saved, but to be damned, by its contents. If we consider only them, better had it been for the English nation that it had still remained in the original Greek and Hebrew, or at least in the honest Latin of St. Jerome, than that several texts in it should have been prevaricated to the destruction of that government which put it into so ungrateful hands.

How many heresies the first translation of Tindal produced in few years, let my Lord Herbert's History of Henry the Eighth inform you; insomuch, that for the gross errors in it, and the great mischiefs it occasioned, a sentence passed on the first edition of the Bible, too shameful almost to be repeated. After the short reign of Edward the Sixth, (who had continued to carry on the Reformation on other principles than it was begun) every one knows, that not only the chief promoters of that work, but many others, whose consciences would not dispense with Popery, were forced, for fear of persecution, to

change climates ; from whence returning at the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, many of them who had been in France, and at Geneva, brought back the rigid opinions and imperious discipline of Calvin to graft upon our Reformation ; which, though they cunningly concealed at first, (as well knowing how nauseously that drug would go down, in a lawful monarchy, which was prescribed for a rebellious commonwealth) yet they always kept it in reserve, and were never wanting to themselves either in court or parliament, when either they had any prospect of a numerous party of fanatic members in the one, or the encouragement of any favourite in the other, whose covetousness was gaping at the patrimony of the church. They who will consult the works of our venerable Hooker, or the account of his life, or more particularly the letter written to him on this subject by George Cranmer, may see by what gradations they proceeded. From the dislike of cap and surplice, the very next step was admonitions to the Parliament against the whole government ecclesiastical : then came out volumes in English and Latin in defence of their tenets ; and immediately practices were set on foot to erect their discipline without authority. Those not succeeding, satire and railing was the next ; and Martin Mar-Prelate (the Marvel of those times) was the first Presbyterian scribbler who sanctified libels and scurrility to the use of the good old cause : which was done, says my author, upon this account, that (their serious treatises having been fully answered and refuted) they might compass by railing what they

had lost by reasoning ; and when their cause was sunk in court and parliament, they might at least hedge in a stake amongst the rabble ; for to their ignorance all things are wit which are abusive ; but if church and state were made the theme, then the doctoral degree of wit was to be taken at Billingsgate. Even the most saint-like of the party, though they durst not excuse this contempt and vilifying of the government, yet were pleased, and grinned at it with a pious smile ; and called it a judgment of God against the hierarchy. Thus sectaries (we may see) were born with teeth, foul-mouthed and scurrilous from their infancy ; and if spiritual pride, venom, violence, contempt of superiors, and slander, had been the marks of orthodox belief, the Presbytery, and the rest of our Schismatics, which are their spawn, were always the most visible church in the Christian world.

It is true, the government was too strong at that time for a rebellion ; but, to show what proficiency they had made in Calvin's school, even then their mouths watered at it ; for two of their gifted brotherhood, Hacket and Coppinger (as the story tells us) got up into a pease-cart, and harangued the people, to dispose them to an insurrection, and to establish their discipline by force : so that, however it comes about that now they celebrate Queen Elizabeth's birth-night as that of their saint and patroness, yet then they were for doing the work of the Lord by arms against her ; and, in all probability, they wanted but a fanatic lord mayor, and two sheriffs of their party to have compassed it.

Our venerable Hooker, after many admonitions which he had given them, towards the end of his preface, breaks out into this prophetic speech: 'There is in every one of these considerations most just cause to fear lest our hastiness to embrace a thing of so perilous consequence, (meaning the Presbyterian discipline) should cause posterity to feel those evils which, as yet, are more easy for us to prevent, than they would be for them to remedy.'

How fatally this Cassandra has foretold, we know too well by sad experience. The seeds were sown in the time of Queen Elizabeth; the bloody harvest ripened in the reign of King Charles the Martyr; and because all the sheaves could not be carried off without shedding some of the loose grains, another crop is too like to follow; nay, I fear it is unavoidable, if the Conventiclers be permitted still to scatter.

A man may be suffered to quote an adversary to our religion, when he speaks truth; and it is the observation of Maimburg, in his History of Calvinism, that wherever that discipline was planted and embraced, rebellion, civil war, and misery, attended it. And how, indeed, should it happen otherwise? Reformation of church and state has always been the ground of our divisions in England. While we were Papists, our holy Father rid us, by pretending authority out of the Scriptures to depose princes; when we shook off his authority, the Sectaries furnished themselves with the same weapons, and out of the same magazine, the Bible. So that the Scriptures, which are in themselves the greatest security of

governors, as commanding express obedience to them, are now turned to their destruction; and never, since the Reformation, has there wanted a text of their interpreting to authorize a rebel. And it is to be noted by the way, that the doctrines of king-killing and deposing, which have been taken up only by the worst party of the Papists, the most frontless flatterers of the Pope's authority, have been espoused, defended, and are still maintained, by the whole body of Nonconformists and Republicans. It is but dubbing themselves the people of God, which it is the interest of their preaches to tell them they are, and their own interest to believe; and after that, they cannot dip into the Bible, but one text or another will turn up for their purpose. If they are under persecution, as they call it, then that is a mark of their election; if they flourish, then God works miracles for their deliverance, and the saints are to possess the earth.

They may think themselves to be too roughly handled in this paper; but I, who know best how far I could have gone on this subject, must be bold to tell them they are spared; though, at the same time, I am not ignorant that they interpret the mildness of a writer to them as they do the mercy of the government; in the one they think it fear, and conclude it weakness in the other. The best way for them to confute me is, as I before advised the Papists, to disclaim their principles, and renounce their practices. We shall all be glad to think them true Englishmen when they obey the king, and true Protestants when they conform to the church discipline,

It remains that I acquaint the reader that these verses were written for an ingenious young gentleman, my friend, upon his translation of *The Critical History of the Old Testament*, composed by the learned Father Simon: the verses, therefore, are addressed to the translator of that work, and the style of them is, what it ought to be, epistolary.

If any one be so lamentable a critic as to require the smoothness, the numbers, and the turn of heroic poetry in this Poem, I must tell him, that if he has not read Horace, I have studied him, and hope the style of his Epistles is not ill imitated here. The expressions of a poem, designed purely for instruction, ought to be plain and natural, and yet majestic; for here the poet is presumed to be a kind of lawgiver, and those three qualities which I have named are proper to the legislative style. The florid, elevated, and figurative way, is for the passions; for love and hatred, fear and anger, are begotten in the soul by showing their objects out of their true proportion, either greater than the life, or less: but instruction is to be given, by showing them what they naturally are. A man is to be cheated into passion, but to be reasoned into truth.

RELIGIO LAICI.

Ornari res ipsa negat, contenta docere.

DIM as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wandering travellers,
Is reason to the soul: and as on high
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
Not light us here; so reason's glimmering ray
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
But guide us upward to a better day.
And as those nightly tapers disappear
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere,
So pale grows Reason at Religion's sight;
So dies, and so dissolves in supernatural light.
Some few, whose lampshone brighter, have been led
From cause to cause, to Nature's secret head,
And found that one first principle must be;
But what, or who, that Universal HE;
Whether some soul encompassing this ball
Unmade, unmoved, yet making, moving all;
Or various atoms' interfering dance
Leap'd into form the noble work of Chance;
Or this great All was from eternity,
Not e'en the Stagirite himself could see;
And Epicurus guess'd as well as he.

As blindly groped they for a future state ;
As rashly judged of Providence and Fate ;
But least of all could their endeavours find
What most concern'd the good of humankind ;
For happiness was never to be found,
But vanish'd from them like enchanted ground.
One thought content the good to be enjoy'd ;
This every little accident destroy'd :
The wiser madmen did for virtue toil,
A thorny, or at best a barren soil :
In pleasure some their glutton souls would steep,
But found their line too short, the well too deep ;
And leaky vessels which no bliss could keep.
Thus anxious thoughts in endless circles roll,
Without a centre where to fix the soul :
In this wild maze their vain endeavours end :
How can the less the greater comprehend ?
Or finite reason reach infinity ?
For what could fathom God, were more than He.

The Deist thinks he stands on firmer ground :
Cries, *Ευρεκα* ; the mighty secret's found :
God is that spring of good ; supreme, and best ;
We, made to serve, and in that service bless'd.
If so, some rules of worship must be given,
Distributed alike to all by Heaven ;
Else God were partial, and to some denied
The means his justice should for all provide.
This general worship is to praise and pray ;
One part to borrow blessings, one to pay :
And when frail nature slides into offence,
The sacrifice for crimes is penitence.
Yet since the' effects of Providence, we find,
Are variously dispensed to human kind ;

That Vice triumphs, and Virtue suffers here,
(A brand that sovereign Justice cannot bear)
Our reason prompts us to a future state,
The last appeal from fortune and from fate,
Where God's all-righteous ways will be declared,
The bad meet punishment ; the good, reward.

Thus man, by his own strength, to Heaven would
soar,

And would not be obliged to God for more.
Vain, wretched creature, how art thou misled,
To think thy wit these god-like notions bred !
These truths are not the product of thy mind,
But dropp'd from Heaven, and of a nobler kind.
Reveal'd Religion first inform'd thy sight,
And Reason saw not, till Faith sprung to light.
Hence all thy natural worship takes the source ;
'Tis revelation what thou think'st discourse :
Else how comest thou to see these truths so clear,
Which so obscure to Heathens did appear ?
Not Plato these, nor Aristotle found,
Nor he whose wisdom oracles renown'd.
Hast thou a wit so deep, or so sublime,
Or canst thou lower dive, or higher climb ?
Canst thou by reason more of Godhead know
Than Plutarch, Seneca, or Cicero ?
Those giant wits, in happier ages born,
When arms and arts did Greece and Rome adorn,
Knew no such system ; no such piles could raise
Of natural worship, built on prayer and praise,
To one sole God.

Nor did remorse, to expiate sin, prescribe,
But slew their fellow-creatures for a bribe :
The guiltless victim groan'd for their offence,
And cruelty and blood was penitence.

If sheep and oxen could atone for men,
Ah! at how cheap a rate the rich might sin!
And great oppressors might Heaven's wrath be-
By offering his own creatures for a spoil! [guile,

Darest thou, poor worm, offend Infinity?
And must the terms of peace be given by thee?
Then thou art justice in the last appeal;
Thy easy God instructs thee to rebel;
And, like a king remote and weak, must take
What satisfaction thou art pleased to make.

But if there be a power too just and strong
To wink at crimes, and bear unpunish'd wrong,
Look humbly upward, see his will disclose
The forfeit first, and then the fine impose:
A mulct thy poverty could never pay,
Had not Eternal Wisdom found the way,
And with celestial wealth supplied thy store;
His justice makes the fine, his mercy quits the score.
See God descending in thy human frame,
The' offended suffering in the' offender's name;
All thy misdeeds to him imputed see,
And all his righteousness devolved on thee.

For granting we have sinned, and that the' offence
Of man is made against Omnipotence,
Some price that bears proportion must be paid,
And infinite with infinite be weigh'd.
See then the Deist lost; remorse for vice
Not paid, or, paid, inadequate in price:
What farther means can reason now direct?
Or what relief from human wit expect?
That shows us sick; and sadly are we sure
Still to be sick, till Heaven reveal the cure:
If then Heaven's will must needs be understood,
(Which must, if we want cure, and Heaven be good)

Let all records of will reveal'd be shown,
With Scripture all in equal balance thrown,
And our one sacred Book will be that one.

Proof needs not here ; for whether we compare
• That impious, idle, superstitious ware
Of rites, lustrations, offerings, which before,
In various ages, various countries bore,
With Christian faith and virtues, we shall find
None answering the great ends of human kind,
But this one rule of life ; that shows us best
How God may be appeased, and mortals blest.
Whether from length of time its worth we draw,
The word is scarce more ancient than the law :
Heaven's early care prescribed for every age,
First in the soul, and after in the page :
Or whether more abstractedly we look,
Or on the writers, or the written Book,
Whence but from Heaven could men unskill'd in
arts,

In several ages born; in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths ? or how, or why
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie ?
Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price.

If on the Book itself we cast our view,
Concurrent heathens prove the story true :
The doctrine' miracles, which must convince,
For Heaven in them appeals to human sense ;
And though they prove not, they confirm the cause,
When what is taught agrees with Nature's laws.

Then for the style ; majestic and divine,
It speaks no less than God in every line ;
Commanding words, whose force is still the same
As the first fiat that produced our frame.

All faiths beside, or did by arms ascend ;
Or sense indulged has made mankind their friend :
This only doctrine does our lusts oppose,
Unfed by Nature's soil in which it grows,
Cross to our interests, curbing sense and sin,
Oppress'd without, and undermined within,
It thrives through pain ; its own tormentors tires ;
And with a stubborn patience still aspires.
To what can reason such effects assign
Transcending nature, but to laws divine ?
Which in that sacred volume are contain'd,
Sufficient, clear, and for that use ordain'd ?

But stay ; the Deist here will urge anew,
No supernatural worship can be true ;
Because a general law is that alone
Which must to all and every where be known ;
A style so large as not this Book can claim,
Nor aught that bears Reveal'd Religion's name :
'Tis said the sound of a Messiah's birth
Is gone through all the habitable earth ;
But still that text must be confined alone
To what was then inhabited and known ;
And what provision could from thence accrue
To Indian souls, and worlds discover'd new ?
In other parts it helps, that, ages past, [braced,
The Scriptures there were known, and were em-
Till sin spread once again the shades of night :
What's that to these who never saw the light ?

Of all objections this indeed is chief,
To startle reason, stagger frail belief :
We grant, 'tis true, that Heaven from human sense
Has hid the secret paths of Providence :
But boundless wisdom, boundless mercy, may
Find, e'en for those bewilder'd souls, a way :

If from his nature foes may pity claim, [name :
Much more may strangers who ne'er heard his
And though no name be for salvation known,
But that of his eternal Son alone ;
Who knows how far transcending goodness can
Extend the merits of that Son to man ?
Who knows what reasons may his mercy lead,
Or ignorance invincible may plead ?
Not only charity bids hope the best,
But more the great Apostle has express'd ;
That, ' if the Gentiles (whom no law inspired)
By nature did what was by law required ;
They who the written rule had never known
Were to themselves both rule and law alone ;
To Nature's plain indictment they shall plead,
And by their conscience be condemn'd or freed.'
Most righteous doom ! because a rule reveal'd
Is none to those from whom it was conceal'd.
Then those who follow'd Reason's dictates right
Lived up, and lifted high their natural light ;
With Socrates may see their Maker's face,
While thousand rubric martyrs want a place.

Nor doth it balk my charity to find
The' Egyptian Bishop of another mind :
For though his Creed eternal truth contains,
'Tis hard for man to doom to endless pains
All who believed not all his zeal required,
Unless he first could prove he was inspired.
Then let us either think he meant to say—
This faith, where publish'd, was the only way ;
Or else conclude that, Arius to confute,
The good old man, too eager in dispute,
Flew high, and, as his Christian fury rose,
Damn'd all for heretics who durst oppose.

Thus far my charity this path hath tried,
(A much unskilful, but well-meaning guide) [bred
Yet what they are, e'en these crude thoughts were
By reading that which better thou hast read,
Thy matchless Author's work ; which thou, my
By well translating better dost commend : [friend,
Those youthful hours, which, of thy equals most
In toys have squander'd, or in vice have lost,
Those hours hast thou to nobler use employ'd,
And the severe delights of truth enjoy'd :
Witness this weighty book, in which appears
The crabbed toil of many thoughtful years,
Spent by thy author in the sifting care
Of Rabbins' old sophisticated ware
From gold divine ; which he who well can sort,
May afterwards make Algebra a sport.
A treasure, which if country curates buy,
They Junius and Tremellius may defy ;
Save pains in various readings and translations,
And without Hebrew make most learn'd quota-
A work so full with various learning fraught, [tions.
So nicely ponder'd, yet so strongly wrought,
As Nature's height and Art's last hand required ;
As much as man could compass uninspired :
Where we may see what errors have been made
Both in the copiers' and translators' trade ;
How Jewish, Popish interests, have prevail'd,
And where infallibility has fail'd.

For some, who have his secret meaning guess'd,
Have found our author not too much a priest :
For fashion-sake he seems to have recourse
To Pope, and councils, and tradition's force :
But he that old traditions could subdue,
Could not but find the weakness of the new.

If Scripture, though derived from heavenly birth,
Has been but carelessly preserved on earth ;
If God's own people, who of God before
Knew what we know, and had been promised more
In fuller terms, of Heaven's assisting care,
And who did neither time nor study spare
To keep this Book untainted, unperplex'd,
Let in gross errors to corrupt the text,
Omitted paragraphs, embroil'd the sense,
With vain traditions stopp'd the gaping fence,
Which every common hand pull'd up with ease,
What safety from such brushwood-helps as these?
If written words from time are not secured,
How can we think have oral sounds endured?
Which thus transmitted, if one mouth has fail'd,
Immortal lies on ages are intail'd ;
And that some such have been, is proved too plain,
If we consider interest, church, and gain.
' Oh but, (says one) tradition set aside,
Where can we hope for an unerring guide?
For, since the' original Scripture has been lost,
All copies disagreeing, maim'd the most,
Or Christian faith can have no certain ground,
Or truth in church-tradition must be found.'

Such an omniscient church we wish indeed ;
'Twere worth both Testaments, cast in the Creed ;
But if this mother be a guide so sure,
As can all doubts resolve, all truths secure ;
Then her infallibility as well,
Where copies are corrupt or lame, can tell ;
Restore lost canon with as little pains
As truly explicate what still remains ;
Which yet no council dare pretend to do,
Unless, like Esdras, they could write it new :
Strange confidence, still to interpret true,

Yet not be sure that all they have explain'd
Is in the blest original contain'd!
More safe, and much more modest 'tis to say,
God would not leave mankind without a way;
And that the Scriptures, though not every where
Free from corruption, or entire, or clear,
Are uncorrupt, sufficient, clear, entire,
In all things which our needful faith require.
If others in the same glass better see,
'Tis for themselves they look, but not for me;
For my salvation must its doom receive
Not from what others, but what I believe.

Must all tradition then be set aside?—

This to affirm were ignorance or pride.
Are there not many points, some needful, sure,
To saving faith, that Scripture leaves obscure?
Which every sect will wrest a several way;
For what one sect interprets, all sects may:
We hold, and say we prove from Scripture plain,
That Christ is God; the bold Socinian
From the same Scripture urges he's but Man.
Now what appeal can end the' important suit?
Both parts talk loudly, but the rule is mute.

Shall I speak plain, and, in a nation free,
Assume an honest layman's liberty?
I think (according to my little skill)
To my own Mother-church submitting still,
That many have been saved, and many may,
Who never heard this question brought in play.
The' unletter'd Christian, who believes in gross,
Plods on to Heaven, and ne'er is at a loss:
For the straight gate would be made straighter yet,
Were none admitted there but men of wit.
The few, by Nature form'd, with learning fraught,
Born to instruct, as others to be taught,

Must study well the sacred page, and see
Which doctrine, this or that, does best agree
With the whole tenor of the work divine,
And plainliest points to Heaven's reveal'd design:
Which exposition flows from genuine sense,
And which is forced by wit and eloquence.
Not that tradition's parts are useless here,
When general, old, disinterested, clear :
That ancient Fathers thus expound the page,
Gives truth the reverend majesty of age ;
Confirms its force by bidding every test ;
For best authorities, next rules, are best ;
And still the nearer to the spring we go,
More limpid, more unsoil'd, the waters flow.
Thus first traditions were a proof alone,
Could we be certain such they were, so known ;
But since some flaws in long descent may be,
They make not truth, but probability.
Even Arius and Pelagius durst provoke
To what the centuries preceding spoke :
Such difference is there in an oft-told tale ;
But truth by its own sinews will prevail.
Tradition written, therefore, more commends
Authority than what from voice descends :
And this, as perfect as its kind can be,
Rolls down to us the sacred history,
Which from the universal church received,
Is tried, and, after, for itself believed.

The partial Papists would infer from hence
Their church, in last resort, should judge the sense.
But first they would assume, with wondrous art,
Themselves to be the whole, who are but part
Of that vast frame, the church : yet grant they were
The handers down, can they from thence infer

A right to' interpret? or would they alone
Who brought the present, claim it for their own
The Book's a common largess to mankind,
Not more for them than every man design'd;
The welcome news is in the letter found,
The carrier's not commission'd to expound.
It speaks itself, and what it does contain,
In all things needful to be known is plain.

In times o'ergrown with rust and ignorance,
A gainful trade their clergy did advance;
When want of learning kept the layman low,
And none but priests were authorized to know:
When what small knowledge was in them did dwell,
And he a god who could but read or spell;
Then Mother-church did mightily prevail,
She parcell'd out the Bible by retail;
But still expounded what she sold or gave,
To keep it in her power to damn and save:
Scripture was scarce, and, as the market went,
Poor laymen took salvation on content,
As needy men take money, good or bad;
God's word they had not, but the priest's they had.
Yet, whate'er false conveyances they made,
The lawyer still was certain to be paid.
In those dark times they learn'd their knack so well,
That by long use they grew infallible:
At last, a knowing age began to' inquire
If they the Book, or that did them inspire; [late,
And, making narrower search, they found, though
That what they thought the priest's was their estate;
Taught by the will produced (the written word)
How long they had been cheated on record.
Then every man, who saw the title fair,
Claim'd a child's part, and put in for a share;

Consulted soberly his private good,
And saved himself as cheap as e'er he could.

'Tis true, my friend, (and far be flattery hence)

This good had full as bad a consequence :

The Book thus put in every vulgar hand,

Which each presumed he best could understand,

The common rule was made the common prey,

And at the mercy of the rabble lay :

The tender page with horny fists was gall'd,

And he was gifted most that loudest bawl'd :

The Spirit gave the doctoral degree,

And every member of a company

Was of his trade, and of the Bible, free.

Plain truths enough for needful use they found,

But men would still be itching to expound :

Each was ambitious of the' obscurest place,

No measure ta'en from knowledge, all from grace ;

Study and pains were now no more their care,

Texts were explain'd by fasting and by prayer ;

This was the fruit the private spirit brought,

Occasion'd by great zeal and little thought.

While crowds unlearn'd, with rude devotion warm,

About the sacred viands buz and swarm.

The fly-blown text creates a crawling brood,

And turn to maggots what was meant for food.

A thousand daily sects rise up and die ;

A thousand more the perish'd race supply :

So all we make of Heaven's discover'd will,

Is not to have it, or to use it ill.

The danger's much the same, on several shelves

If others wreck us, or we wreck ourselves.

What then remains but, waving each extreme,

The tides of ignorance and pride to stem ?

Neither so rich a treasure to forego,
Nor proudly seek beyond our power to know;
Faith is not built on disquisitions vain;
The things we must believe, are few and plain:
But since men will believe more than they need,
And every man will make himself a creed,
In doubtful questions 'tis the safest way
To learn what unsuspected Ancients say;
For 'tis not likely we should higher soar
In search of Heaven than all the church before:
Nor can we be deceived, unless we see
The Scripture and the Fathers disagree.
If, after all, they stand suspected still,
(For no man's faith depends upon his will)
'Tis some relief, that points not clearly known,
Without much hazard, may be let alone;
And, after hearing what our church can say,
If still our reason runs another way,
That private reason 'tis more just to curb,
Than by disputes the public peace disturb:
For points obscure are of small use to learn,
But common quiet is mankind's concern.

Thus have I made my own opinions clear,
Yet neither praise expect, nor censure fear;
And this unpolish'd, rugged verse I chose
As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose:
For while from sacred truth I do not swerve,
Tom Sternhold's or Tom Shadwell's rhymes will
serve.

THRENODIA AUGUSTALIS:

A funeral Pindaric Poem,

SACRED TO THE HAPPY MEMORY OF KING
CHARLES II. 1685.

Fortunati ambo! si quid mea carmina possunt,
Nulla dies unquam memori vos eximet ævo. VIRG.

THUS long my grief has kept me dumb:
Sure there's a lethargy in mighty woe,
Tears stand congeal'd, and cannot flow;
And the sad soul retires into her inmost room.
Tears, for a stroke foreseen, afford relief;
But, unprovided for a sudden blow,
Like Niobé we marble grow,
And petrify with grief.
Our British heaven was all serene;
No threatening cloud was nigh,
Not the least wrinkle to deform the sky;
We lived as unconcern'd and happily
As the first age in Nature's golden scene.
Supine amidst our flowing store,
We slept securely, and we dream'd of more;
When suddenly the thunder-clap was heard:
It took us unprepared, and out of guard,
Already lost, before we fear'd.

The' amazing news of Charles at once were spread;
At once the general voice declared
' Our gracious Prince was dead.'
No sickness known before, no slow disease,
To soften grief by just degrees ;
But, like an hurricane on Indian seas,
The tempest rose ;
An unexpected burst of woes ;
With scarce a breathing space betwixt,
This now becalm'd, and perishing the next.
As if great Atlas from his height
Should sink beneath his heavenly weight,
And with a mighty flaw, the flaming wall,
(As once it shall,)
Should gape immense, and, rushing down, o'er-
whelm this nether ball ;
So swift and so surprising was our fear ;
Our Atlas fell indeed ; but Hercules was near.

His pious brother, sure the best
Who ever bore that name,
Was newly risen from his rest,
And, with a fervent flame,
His usual morning vows had just address'd
For his dear Sovereign's health ;
And hoped to have them heard
In long increase of years,
In honour, fame, and wealth.
Guiltless of greatness thus he always pray'd,
Nor knew nor wish'd those vows he made,
On his own head should be repaid.
Soon as the' ill-omen'd rumour reach'd his ear,
(Ill news is wing'd with fate, and flies apace) .
Who can describe the' amazement of his face !

Horror in all his pomp was there,
Mute and magnificent, without a tear;
And then the hero first was seen to fear.
Half unarray'd he ran to his relief,
So hasty and so artless was his grief:
Approaching Greatness met him with her charms
Of power and future state;
But look'd so ghastly in a brother's fate,
He shook her from his arms.—
Arrived within the mournful room, he saw
A wild distraction, void of awe,
And arbitrary grief unbounded by a law;
God's image, God's anointed, lay
Without motion, pulse, or breath,
A senseless lump of sacred clay,
An image, now, of Death.
Amidst his sad attendants' groans and cries,
The lines of that adored, forgiving face;
Distorted from their native grace;
An iron slumber sat on his majestic eyes.
The pious Duke———forbear, audacious Muse,
No terms thy feeble art can use
Are able to adorn so vast a woe:
The grief of all the rest like subject-grief did show;
His like a sovereign did transcend;
No wife, no brother, such a grief could know,
Nor any name, but friend.

O wondrous changes of a fatal scene,
Still varying to the last!
Heaven, though its hard decree was past,
Seem'd pointing to a gracious turn again;
And Death's uplifted arm arrested in its haste.

Heaven half repented of the doom,
And almost grievèd it had foreseen
What, by foresight, it will'd eternally to come.
Mercy above did hourly plead
For her resemblance here below,
And mild Forgiveness intercede
To stop the coming blow.
New miracles approach'd the' ethereal throne,
Such as his wondrous life had oft and lately known
And urged that still they might be shown.
On earth his pious brother pray'd and vow'd,
Renouncing greatness at so dear a rate,
Himself defending what he could
From all the glories of his future fate.
With him the' innumerable crowd
Of armed prayers
Knock'd at the gates of Heaven, and knock'd aloud;
The first well-meaning rude petitioners.
All for his life assail'd the throne,
All would have bribed the Skies by offering up
their own.
So great a throng not Heaven itself could bar;
'Twas almost borne by force, as in the Giants' war.
The prayers, at least, for his reprieve were heard;
His death, like Hezekiah's, was deferr'd:
Against the sun the shadow went;
Five days those five degrees were lent
To form our patience, and prepare the' event,
The second causes took the swift command,
The medicinal head, the ready hand,
All eager to perform their part;
All but eternal Doom was conquer'd by their art:
Once more the fleeting soul came back

To' inspire the mortal frame,
And in the body took a doubtful stand,
Doubtful and hovering, like expiring flame
That mounts and falls by turns, and trembles o'er
the brand.

The joyful short-lived news soon spread around,
Took the same train, the same impetuous bound :
The drooping Town in smiles again was dress'd ;
Gladness in every face express'd,
Their eyes before their tongues confess'd.
Men met each other with erected look,
The steps were higher that they took ;
Friends to congratulate their friends made haste,
And long inveterate foes saluted as they pass'd.
Above the rest heroic James appear'd,
Exalted more because he more had fear'd ;
His manly heart, whose noble pride
Was still above
Dissembled hate or varnish'd love,
Its more than common transport could not hide ;
But, like an eagle¹, rode in triumph o'er the tide.
Thus, in alternate course,
The tyrant passions, hope and fear,
Did in extremes appear,
And flash'd upon the soul with equal force.
Thus, at half-ebb, a rolling sea
Returns, and wins upon the shore ;
The watry herd, affrighted at the roar,
Rest on their fins awhile, and stay,
Then backward take their wondering way :

¹ An eagle is a tide swelling above another tide, and observable in the Trent and Severn.

The prophet wonders more than they
At prodigies but rarely seen before,
And cries, 'A king must fall, or kingdoms change
their sway.'

Such were our counter-tides at land, and so
Presaging of the fatal blow
In their prodigious ebb and flow.
The royal soul, that, like the labouring moon,
By charms of art was hurried down,
Forced with regret to leave her native sphere,
Came but a while on liking here ;
Soon weary of the painful strife,
And made but faint essays of life.
An evening light,
Soon shut in night ;
A strong distemper, and a weak relief,
Short intervals of joy, and long returns of grief.

The sons of Art all medicines tried,
And every noble remedy applied :
With emulation each essay'd
His utmost skill ; nay more, they pray'd :
Never was losing game with better conduct play'd :
Death never won a stake with greater toil,
Nor e'er was Fate so near a foil :
But, like a fortress on a rock, [mock.
The' impregnable disease their vain attempts did
They mined it near ; they batter'd from afar
With all the cannon of the medicinal war :
No gentle means could be essay'd ;
'Twas beyond parley when the siege was laid :
The' extremest ways they first ordain,
Prescribing such intolerable pain,
As none but Cæsar could sustain ;

Undaunted Cæsar underwent
The malice of their art, nor bent
Beneath whate'er their pious rigour could invent.
In five such days he suffer'd more
Than any suffer'd in his reign before :
More, infinitely more, than he
Against the worst of rebels could decree,
A traitor, or twice-pardon'd enemy.
Now Art was tired without success ;
No racks could make the stubborn malady confess.

The vain insurers of life,
And they who most perform'd, and promised less,
Even Short and Hobbes, forsook the unequal strife.
Death and despair were in their looks ;
No longer they consult their memories or books :
Like helpless friends, who view from shore
The labouring ship, and hear the tempest roar,
So stood they with their arms across,
Not to assist, but to deplore
The' inevitable loss.

Death was denounced, that frightful sound,
Which e'en the best can hardly bear :
He took the summons void of fear,
And, unconcern'dly, cast his eyes around,
As if to find and dare the grisly challenger.
What Death could do he lately tried,
When in four days he more than died.
The same assurance all his words did grace ;
The same majestic mildness held its place,
Nor lost the Monarch in his dying face :
Intrepid, pious, merciful, and brave,
He look'd as when he conquer'd and forgave.

As if some angel had been sent
To lengthen out his government,
And to foretell as many years again
As he had number'd in his happy reign ;
So cheerfully he took the doom
Of his departing breath,
Nor shrunk, nor stepp'd aside for Death ;
But, with unalter'd pace, kept on,
Providing for events to come
When he resign'd the throne.
Still he maintain'd his kingly state,
And grew familiar with his fate :
Kind, good, and gracious, to the last,
On all he loved before, his dying beams he cast.
Oh truly good and truly great,
For glorious as he rose, benignly so he set !
All that on earth he held most dear,
He recommended to his care,
To whom both Heaven
The right had given,
And his own love bequeath'd supreme command :
He took and press'd that ever-loyal hand,
Which could in peace secure his reign,
Which could in war his power maintain ;
That hand, on which no plighted vows were ever
Well, for so great a trust, he chose [vain.
A prince who never disobey'd,
Not when the most severe commands were laid ;
Nor want nor exile with his duty weigh'd ;
A prince on whom, if Heaven its eyes could close,
The welfare of the world it safely might repose.

That king who lived to God's own heart,
Yet less serenely died than he :

Charles left behind no harsh decree,
For schoolmen with laborious art
To salve from cruelty :
Those for whom love could no excuses frame
He graciously forgot to name.
Thus far my Muse, though rudely, has design'd
Some faint resemblance of his godlike mind ;
But neither pen nor pencil can express
The parting brother's tenderness :
Though that's a term too mean and low ;
(The bless'd above a kinder word may know ;)
But what they did and what they said,
The Monarch who triumphant went,
The militant who staid,
Like painters, when their heightening arts are spent,
I cast into a shade.
That all-forgiving King,
The type of Him above,
That inexhausted spring
Of clemency and love ;
Himself to his next self accused,
And ask'd that pardon which he ne'er refused,
For faults not his, for guilt and crimes
Of godless men, and of rebellious times ;
For an hard exile, kindly meant,
When his ungrateful country sent
Their best Camillus into banishment ;
And forced their sovereign's act, they could not
his consent.
Oh how much rather had that injured chief
Repeated all his sufferings past,
Than hear a pardon begged at last,
Which given, could give the dying no relief !
He bent, he sunk beneath his grief !

His dauntless heart would fain have held
From weeping, but his eyes rebell'd :
Perhaps the godlike hero in his breast
Disdain'd, or was ashamed to show
So weak, so womanish a woe,
Which yet the brother and the friend so plente-
ously confess'd.

Amidst that silent shower the royal mind
An easy passage found,
And left its sacred earth behind; [sound,
Nor murmuring groan express'd, nor labouring
Nor any least tumultuous breath;
Calm was his life, and quiet was his death ;
Soft as those gentle whispers were
In which the' Almighty did appear ;
By the still voice the prophet knew him there.
That peace which made thy prosperous reign to
shine,
That peace thou leavest to thy imperial line,
That peace, oh happy Shade, be ever thine !

For all those joys thy restoration brought,
For all the miracles it wrought,
For all the healing balm thy mercy pour'd
Into the nation's bleeding wound,
And care that after kept it sound ;
For numerous blessings yearly shower'd,
And property with plenty crown'd ;
For freedom still maintain'd alive,
Freedom, which in no other land will thrive,
Freedom, an English subject's sole prerogative,
Without whose charms e'en peace would be
But a dull quiet slavery ;

For these, and more, accept our pious praise ;
'Tis all the subsidy
The present age can raise ;
The rest is charged on late posterity :
Posterity is charged the more,
Because the large abounding store,
To them, and to their heirs, is still entail'd by thee.
Succession, of a long descent,
Which chastely in the channels ran,
And from our demi-gods began,
Equal almost to time in its extent ;
Through hazards numberless and great
Thou hast derived this mighty blessing down,
And fix'd the fairest gem that decks the' imperial
Not faction, when it shook thy regal seat, [crown.
Not senates insolently loud,
(Those echoes of a thoughtless crowd)
Not foreign or domestic treachery,
Could warp thy soul to their unjust decree.
So much thy foes thy manly mind mistook,
Who judg'd it by the mildness of thy look
Like a well-temper'd sword it bent at will,
But kept the native toughness of the steel.

Be true, O Clio, to thy hero's name ;
But draw him strictly so,
That all who view the piece may know
He needs no trappings of fictitious fame:
The load's too weighty ; thou may'st choose
Some parts of praise, and some refuse :
Write, that his annals may be thought more lavish
than the Muse.

In scanty truth thou hast confined
The virtues of a royal mind,
Forgiving, bounteous, humble, just, and kind :

His conversation, wit, and parts,
His knowledge in the noblest, useful arts,
Were such dead authors could not give ;
But habitudes of those who live,
Who, lighting him, did greater lights receive :
He drain'd from all, and all they knew ;
His apprehension quick, his judgment true ;
That the most learn'd, with shame, confess
His knowledge more, his reading only less.

Amidst the peaceful triumphs of his reign,
What wonder if the kindly beams he shed
Revived the drooping arts again,
If Science raised her head,
And soft Humanity, that from Rebellion fled ?
Our isle, indeed, too fruitful was before,
But all uncultivated lay
Out of the Solar Walk and Heaven's high way ;
With rank Geneva weeds run o'er,
And cockle, at the best, amidst the corn it bore :
The royal husbandman appear'd,
And plough'd, and sow'd, and till'd ;
The thorns he rooted out, the rubbish clear'd,
And bless'd the' obedient field ;
When, straight, a double harvest rose,
Such as the swarthy Indian mows,
Or happier climates near the line,
Of Paradise, manured and dress'd by hands divine.

As when the new-born phoenix takes his way,
His rich paternal regions to survey,
Of airy choristers a numerous train
Attends his wondrous progress o'er the plain ;
So, rising from his father's urn,
So glorious did our Charles return.

(For 'tis a lesson dearly bought)
Assurance here is never to be sought.
The best, and best-beloved of kings,
And best deserving to be so,
When scarce he had escaped the fatal blow
Of faction and conspiracy,
Death did his promised hopes destroy:
He toil'd, he gain'd, but lived not to enjoy.
What mists of Providence are these
Through which we cannot see!
So saints, by supernatural power set free,
Are left at last in martyrdom to die;
Such is the end of oft-repeated miracles.
Forgive me, Heaven, that impious thought,
'Twas grief for Charles, to madness wrought,
That question'd thy supreme decree!
Thou didst his gracious reign prolong,
Even in thy saints' and angels' wrong,
His fellow-citizens of immortality;
For twelve long years of exile borne,
Twice twelve we number'd since his bless'd return:
So strictly wert thou just to pay,
Even to the driblet of a day,
Yet still we murmur, and complain
The quails and manna should no longer rain:
Those miracles 'twas needless to renew;
The chosen flock has now the Promised land in view.

A warlike prince ascends the regal state,
A prince long exercised by Fate:
Long may he keep, though he obtains it late!
Heroes in Heaven's peculiar mould are cast;
They, and their poets, are not form'd in haste:
Man was the first in God's design, and man was
made the last.

False heroes, made by flattery so,
Heaven can strike out, like sparkles, at a blow ;
But, ere a prince is to perfection brought,
He costs Omnipotence a second thought.

With toil and sweat,
With hardening cold, and forming heat,
The Cyclops did their strokes repeat,
Before the' impenetrable shield was wrought.
It looks as if the Maker would not own
The noble work for his
Before 'twas tried and found a masterpiece.

View then a monarch ripen'd for a throne,
Alcides thus his race began,
O'er infancy he swiftly ran ;
The future god, at first, was more than man :
Dangers and toils, and Juno's hate,
Even o'er his cradle lay in wait,
And there he grappled first with Fate :
In his young hands the hissing snakes he press'd ;
So early was the deity confess'd :
Thus, by degrees, he rose to Jove's imperial seat ;
Thus difficulties prove a soul legitimately great.
Like his, our hero's infancy was tried ;
Betimes the Furies did their snakes provide,
And to his infant arms oppose
His father's rebels, and his brother's foes ;
The more oppress'd, the higher still he rose :
Those were the preludes of his fate,
That form'd his manhood, to subdue
The hydra of the many-headed hissing crew.

As after Numa's peaceful reign
The martial Ancus did the sceptre wield,
Furbish'd the rusty sword again,
Resumed the long-forgotten shield,

And led the Latins to the dusty field :
So James the drowsy Genius wakes
Of Britain, long entranced in charms,
Restiff, and slumbering on its arms : [ready shakes.
'Tis roused, and with a new-strung nerve the spear al-
No neighing of the warrior steeds,
No drum, or louder trumpet, needs
To' inspire the coward, warm the cold ;
His voice, his sole appearance, makes them bold,
Gaul and Batavia dread the' impending blow ;
Too well the vigour of that arm they know ; [foe.
They lick the dust, and crouch beneath their fatal
Long may they fear this awful prince,
And not provoke his lingering sword,
Peace is their only sure defence,
Their best security his word.
In all the changes of his doubtful state,
His truth, like Heaven's, was kept inviolate :
For him to promise is to make it fate.
His valour can triumph o'er land and main :
With broken oaths his fame he will not stain, [gain.
With conquest basely bought, and with inglorious

For once, O Heaven, unfold thy adamantine Book ;
And let his wondering senate see,
If not thy firm immutable decree,
At least the second page of strong contingency ;
Such as consists with wills originally free :
Let them with glad amazement look
On what their happiness may be ;
Let them not still be obstinately blind,
Still to divert the good thou hast design'd,
Or with malignant penury
To starve the royal virtues of his mind,

Faith is a Christian's and a subject's test;
Oh give them to believe, and they are surely bless'd!
They do; and, with a distant view, I see
The' amended vows of English loyalty:
And all beyond that object there appears
The long retinue of a prosperous reign,
A series of successful years,
In orderly array, a martial, manly train.
Behold even to remoter shores
A conquering navy proudly spread;
The British cannon formidably roars,
While, starting from his oozy bed,
The' asserted Ocean rears his reverend head,
To view and recognize his ancient Lord again,
And, with a willing hand, restores
The fasces of the main.

BRITANNIA REDIVIVA:

A POEM ON THE PRINCE.

BORN 10TH JUNE, 1688.

OUR vows are heard betimes, and Heaven takes
To grant, before we can conclude, the prayer; [care
Preventing angels met it half the way,
And sent us back to praise who came to pray.

Just on the day, when the high-mounted sun
Did farthest in its northern progress run,
He bended forward, and even stretch'd the sphere
Beyond the limits of the lengthen'd year,
To view a brighter sun in Britain born;
That was the business of his longest morn:
The glorious object seen, 'twas time to turn.

Departing Spring could only stay to shed
Her bloomy beauties on the genial bed,
But left the manly Summer in her stead,
With timely fruit the longing land to cheer,
And to fulfil the promise of the year.
Betwixt two seasons comes the' auspicious heir,
This age to blossom, and the next to bear.

Last solemn Sabbath saw the church attend,
The Paraclete in fiery pomp descend ;
But when his wondrous octave roll'd again,
He brought a royal infant in his train.
So great a blessing to so good a King
None but the' eternal Comforter could bring.

Or did the mighty Trinity conspire,
As once in council to create our sire ?
It seems as if they sent the new-born guest
To wait on the procession of their feast ;
And on their sacred anniverse decreed
To stamp their image on the promised seed.
Three realms united, and on one bestow'd,
An emblem of their mystic union show'd :
The mighty trine the triple empire shared,
As every person would have one to guard.

Hail, Son of Prayers ! by holy violence
Drawn down from Heaven ; but long be banish'd
thence,

And late to thy paternal skies retire :
To mend our crimes whole ages would require ;
To change the' inveterate habit of our sins,
And finish what thy godlike sire begins.
Kind Heaven, to make us Englishmen again,
No less can give us than a patriarch's reign.

The sacred cradle to your charge receive,
Ye Seraphs, and by turns the guard relieve ;

Thy father's angel and thy father join
To keep possession, and secure the line ;
But long defer the honours of thy fate :
Great may they be like his, like his be late ;
That James his running century may view,
And give his son an auspice to the new.

Our wants exact at least that moderate stay ;
For see the Dragon winged on his way,
To watch the travail, and devour the prey.
Or, if allusions may not rise so high,
Thus, when Alcides raised his infant-cry,
The snakes besieged his young divinity :
But vainly with their forked tongues they threat ;
For opposition makes a hero great.
To needful succour all the good will run,
And Jove assert the godhead of his son.

O still repining at your present state,
Grudging yourselves the benefits of fate,
Look up, and read in characters of light
A blessing sent you in your own despite.
The manna falls, yet that celestial bread,
Like Jews, you munch, and murmur while you feed :
May not your fortune be like theirs, exiled,
Yet forty years to wander in the wild ;
Or if it be, may Moses live at least,
To lead you to the verge of promised rest.

Though poets are not prophets, to foreknow
What plants will take the blight and what will grow ;
By tracing Heaven his footsteps may be found ;
Behold ! how awfully he walks the round !
God is abroad, and, wondrous in his ways,
The rise of empires and their fall surveys :
More (might I say) than with a usual eye,
He sees his bleeding church in ruin lie,
And hears the souls of saints beneath his altar cry.

Already has he lifted high the sign ¹
 Which crown'd the conquering arms of Constantine:
 The moon ² grows pale at that presaging sight,
 And half her train of stars have lost their light.

Behold another Sylvester³, to bless
 The sacred standard, and secure success;
 Large of his treasures, of a soul so great,
 As fills and crowds his universal seat.

Now view at home a second Constantine⁴;
 (The former, too, was of the British line)
 Has not his healing balm your breaches closed,
 Whose exile many sought, and few opposed?
 O! did not Heaven, by its eternal doom,
 Permit those evils that this good might come?
 So manifest, that e'en the moon-eyed sects
 See whom and what this Providence protects.
 Methinks, had we within our minds no more
 Than that one shipwreck on the fatal Ore⁵,
 That only thought may make us think again,
 What wonders God reserves for such a reign.
 To dream that Chance his preservation wrought,
 Were to think Noah was preserved for nought;
 Or the surviving eight were not design'd
 To people earth, and to restore their kind.

When humbly on the royal Babe we gaze,
 The manly lines of a majestic face
 Give awful joy: 'tis paradise to look
 On the fair frontispiece of Nature's book:
 If the first opening page so charms the sight,
 Think how the' unfolded volume will delight!
 See how the venerable infant lies
 In early pomp; how through the mother's eyes

¹ The Cross.

² The Crescent of the Turks.

³ Pope Sylvester.

⁴ King James II.

⁵ The Oresand.

The father's soul, with an undaunted view,
Looks out, and takes our homage as his due.
See on his future subjects how he smiles,
Nor meanly flatters, nor with craft beguiles;
But with an open face, as on his throne,
Assures our birthrights, and assumes his own.
Born in broad day-light, that the' ungrateful rout
May find no room for a remaining doubt;
Truth, which itself is light, does darkness shun,
And the true eaglet safely dares the sun.

Fain would the fiends have made a dubious birth⁶,
Loath to confess the Godhead clothed in earth:
But sicken'd after all their baffled lies,
To find an heir-apparent in the skies:
Abandon'd to despair, still may they grudge,
And, owning not the Saviour, prove the Judge.

Not great Æneas stood in plainer day,
When, the dark mantling mist dissolved away,
He to the Tyrians show'd his sudden face,
Shining with all his goddess-mother's grace:
For she herself had made his countenance bright,
Breathed honour on his eyes, and her own purple
light.

If our victorious Edward⁷, as they say,
Gave Wales a prince on that propitious day,
Why may not years, revolving with his fate,
Produce his like, but with a longer date?
One who may carry to a distant shore
The terror that his famed forefather bore.
But why should James or his young hero stay
For slight presages of a name or day?

⁶ Alluding to the temptations in the wilderness.

⁷ Edward, the Black Prince, born on Trinity Sunday.

We need no Edward's fortune to adorn
That happy moment when our Prince was born:
Our Prince adorns this day, and ages hence
Shall wish his birth-day for some future prince.

Great Michael, prince of all the' etherial hosts,
And whate'er inborn saints our Britain boasts;
And thou, the' adopted patron^s of our isle,
With cheerful aspects on this infant smile:
The pledge of Heaven, which, dropping from
Secures our bliss, and reconciles his love. [above,

Enough of ills our dire rebellion wrought,
When to the dregs we drank the bitter draught;
Then airy atoms did in plagues conspire,
Nor did the' avenging angel yet retire,
But purged our still-increasing crimes with fire.
Then perjured plots, the still-impending test,
And worse—but charity conceals the rest:
Here stop the current of the sanguine flood;
Require not, gracious God! thy martyr's blood;
But let their dying pangs, their living toil,
Spread a rich harvest through their native soil:
A harvest ripening for another reign,
Of which this royal Babe may reap the grain.

Enough of early saints one womb has given;
Enough increased the family of Heaven:
Let them for his and our atonement go,
And reigning bless'd above, leave him to rule below.

Enough already has the year foreshow'd;
His wonted course the sea has overflow'd,
The meads were floated with a weeping spring,
And frighten'd birds in woods forgot to sing:
The strong-limb'd steed beneath his harness faints,
And the same shivering sweat his lord attains.

^s St. George.

When will the minister of wrath give o'er?
 Behold him at Arauna's threshing-floor⁹
 He stops, and seems to sheathe his flaming brand,
 Pleased with burnt incense from our David's hand.
 David has bought the Jebusite's abode,
 And raised an altar to the living God.

Heaven, to reward him, make his joys sincere:
 No future ills nor accidents appear
 To sully and pollute the sacred infant's year.
 Five months to discord and debate were given;
 He sanctifies the yet remaining seven.
 Sabbath of months! henceforth in him be bless'd,
 And prelude to the realm's perpetual rest!

Let his baptismal drops for us atone;
 Lustrations for offences not his own,
 Let conscience, which is interest ill disguised, [tized.
 In the same font be cleansed, and all the land bap-

Unnamed as yet, at least unknown to fame,
 Is there a strife in Heaven about his name;
 Where every famous predecessor vies,
 And makes a faction for it in the skies?
 Or must it be reserved to thought alone?
 Such was the sacred Tetragrammaton¹⁰.
 Things worthy silence must not be reveal'd;
 Thus the true name of Rome was kept conceal'd,
 To shun the spells and sorceries of those
 Who durst her infant majesty oppose.
 But when his tender strength in time shall rise
 To dare ill tongues and fascinating eyes,
 This isle, which hides the little thunderer's fame,
 Shall be too narrow to contain his name:

⁹ Alluding to the passage in the first book of Kings, chap. xxiv.

¹⁰ Jehovah: unlawful to be pronounced by the Jews.

The' artillery of Heaven shall make him known;
Crete could not hold the god when Jove was grown.

As Jove's increase¹¹, who from his brain was
Whom arms and arts did equally adorn, [born,
Free of the breast was bred, whose milky taste
Minerva's name to Venus had debased;
So this imperial Babe rejects the food
That mixes monarchs' with plebeian blood;
Food that his inborn courage might control,
Extinguish all the father in his soul,
And, for his Estian race, and Saxon strain,
Might reproduce some second Richard's reign.
Mildness he shares from both his parents' blood:
But kings too tame are despicably good:
Be this the mixture of this regal child,
By nature manly, but by virtue mild.

Thus far the furious transport of the news
Had to prophetic madness fired the Muse;
Madness ungovernable, uninspired,
Swift to foretell whatever she desired.
Was it for me the dark abyss to tread,
And read the book which angels cannot read?
How was I punish'd when the sudden blast¹²
The face of Heaven and our young sun o'ercast!
Fame, the swift ill, increasing as she roll'd,
Disease, Despair, and Death, at three reprises told:
At three insulting strides she stalk'd the Town,
And, like Contagion, struck the loyal down.
Down fell the winnow'd wheat: but mounted high,
The whirlwind bore the chaff, and hid the sky.
Here black Rebellion shooting from below,
(As earth's gigantic brood by moments grow)
And here the sons of God are petrified with woe:

¹¹ Pallas.

¹² A false report of the Prince's death.

An apoplex of grief ! so low were driven
The saints, as hardly to defend their Heaven.

As when pent vapours run their hollow round,
Earthquakes, which are convulsions of the ground,
Break bellowing forth, and no confinement brook,
Till the third settles what the former shook ;
Such heavings had our souls ; till, slow and late,
Our life with his return'd, and faith prevail'd on Fate,
By prayers the mighty blessing was implored,
To prayers was granted, and by prayers restored.

So, ere the Shunamite¹³ a son conceived,
The prophet promised, and the wife believed.
A son was sent, the son so much desired :
But soon upon the mother's knees expired.
The troubled seer approach'd the mournful door,
Ran, pray'd, and sent his pastoral staff before,
Then stretch'd his limbs upon the child and mourn'd,
Till warmth, and breath, and a new soul return'd.
Thus Mercy stretches out her hand, and saves
Desponding Peter sinking in the waves,

As when a sudden storm of hail and rain
Beats to the ground the yet unbearded grain,
Think not the hopes of harvest are destroy'd
On the flat field, and on the naked void :
The light, unloaded stem, from tempest freed,
Will raise the youthful honours of his head ;
And, soon restored by native vigour, bear
The timely product of the bounteous year.

Nor yet conclude all fiery trials pass'd ;
For Heaven will exercise us to the last ;
Sometimes will check us in our full career
With doubtful blessings, and with mingled fear ;

¹³ In the second book of Kings, chap. iv.

That, still depending on his daily grace,
His every mercy for an alms may pass ;
With sparing hands will diet us to good ;
Preventing surfeits of our pamper'd blood.
So feeds the mother-bird her craving young
With little morsels, and delays them long.

True, this last blessing was a royal feast ;
But where 's the wedding-garment on the guest ?
Our manners, as religion were a dream,
Are such as teach the nations to blaspheme.
In lusts we wallow, and with pride we swell,
And injuries with injuries repel ;
Prompt to revenge, not daring to forgive,
Our lives unteach the doctrine we believe.
Thus Israel sinn'd, impenitently hard,
And vainly thought the present ark their guard ¹⁴ ;
But when the haughty Philistines appear,
They fled, abandon'd to their foes and fear ;
Their God was absent, though his ark was there.
Ah ! lest our crimes should snatch this pledge away,
And make our joys the blessings of a day !
For we have sinn'd him hence, and that he lives,
God to his promise, not our practice, gives ;
Our crimes would soon weigh down the guilty scale,
But James, and Mary, and the Church prevail.
Nor Amalek can rout the chosen bands ¹⁵ ;
While Hur and Aaron hold up Moses' hands.

By living well let us secure his days,
Moderate in hopes, and humble in our ways.
No force the free-born spirit can constrain,
But charity and great examples gain.

¹⁴ 1 Sam. iv. 10.

¹⁵ Exod. xvii. 8.

Forgiveness is our thanks for such a day;
'Tis godlike, God in his own coin to pay.

But you, propitious Queen ! translated here,
From your mild Heaven, to rule our rugged sphere,
Beyond the sunny walks and circling year;
You, who your native climate have bereft
Of all the virtues, and the vices left;
Whom piety and beauty make their boast,
Though beautiful is well in pious lost;
So lost as star-light is dissolved away,
And melts into the brightness of the day;
Or gold about the regal diadem,
Lost to improve the lustre of the gem;
What can we add to your triumphant day?
Let the great gift the beauteous giver pay:
For should our thanks awake the rising sun,
And lengthen as his latest shadows run,
That, though the longest day, would soon, too
soon be done.

Let angels' voices with their harps conspire,
But keep the' auspicious infant from the choir;
Late let him sing above, and let us know
No sweeter music than his cries below.

Nor can I wish to you, great Monarch ! more
Than such an annual income to your store;
The day which gave this Unit did not shine
For a less omen than to fill the Trine.

After a Prince an Admiral beget;
The Royal Sovereign wants an anchor yet.
Our isle has younger titles still in store,
And when the' exhausted land can yield no more,
Your line can force them from a foreign shore.

The name of Great your martial mind will suit;
But Justice is your darling attribute :

Of all the Greeks 'twas but one hero's ¹⁶ due,
And in him Plutarch prophesied of you :
A prince's favours but on few can fall,
But justice is a virtue shared by all.

Some kings the name of Conquerors have assumed,

Some to be great, some to be gods presumed ;
But boundless power and arbitrary lust
Made tyrants still abhor the name of Just ;
They shunn'd the praise this godlike virtue gives,
And fear'd a title that reproach'd their lives.

The power from which all kings derive their state,
Whom they pretend, at least, to imitate,
Is equal both to punish and reward ;
For few would love their God unless they fear'd.

Resistless force and immortality
Make but a lame, imperfect deity :
Tempests have force unbounded to destroy ;
And deathless being even the damn'd enjoy ;
And yet Heaven's attributes, both last and first,
One without life, and one with life accurs'd :
But Justice is Heaven's self, so strictly he,
That could it fail, the Godhead could not be.
This virtue is your own ; but life and state
Are one to Fortune subject, one to Fate :
Equal to all, you justly frown or smile ;
Nor hopes nor fears your steady hand beguile ;
Yourself our balance hold, the world's our isle,

¹⁶ Aristides. See his life in Plutarch.

THE MEDAL.

A SATIRE AGAINST SEDITION.

1681.

EPISTLE TO THE WHIGS:

FOR to whom can I dedicate this Poem with so much justice as to you? It is the representation of your own hero; it is the picture drawn at length, which you admire and prize so much in little¹. None of your ornaments are wanting; neither the landscape of the Tower, nor the Rising Sun; nor the *anno domini* of your new sovereign's coronation. This must needs be a grateful undertaking to your whole party, especially to those who have not been so happy as to purchase the original. I hear the graver has made a good market of it: all his kings are bought up already; or the value of the remainder so enhanced, that many a poor Polander², who would be glad to worship the

¹ On the Jury's refusing to find a bill against Lord Shaftesbury for high treason in Nov. 1681, a medal was struck to commemorate the event, which gave occasion to Dryden's satire.

² Shaftesbury was said to entertain hopes that he should be elected King of Poland.

image, is not able to go to the cost of him, but must be content to see him here. I must confess I am no great artist; but sign-post painting will serve the turn to remember a friend by, especially when better is not to be had: yet, for your comfort, the lineaments are true; and though he sat not five times to me, as he did to B.³ yet I have consulted history; as the Italian painters do, when they would draw a Nero or a Caligula; though they have not seen the man, they can help their imagination by a statue of him, and find out the colouring from Suetonius and Tacitus. Truth is, you might have spared one side of your Medal: the head would be seen to more advantage if it were placed on a spike of the Tower, a little nearer to the sun, which would then break out to better purpose.

You tell us, in your Preface to the No-protestant Plot⁴, that you shall be forced hereafter to leave off your modesty. I suppose you mean that little which is left you; for it was worn to rags when you put out this Medal. Never was there practised such a piece of notorious impudence in the face of an established government. I believe, when he is dead, you will wear him in thumb-rings, as the Turks did Scanderbeg; as if there were virtue in his bones to preserve you against monarchy. Yet all this while you pretend not only zeal for the public good, but a due veneration for the person of the King. But all men, who can see an inch before them, may easily detect

³ George Bower, a medallist engraver.

⁴ A tract in three parts, printed in 1682.

those gross fallacies. That it is necessary for men in your circumstances to pretend both, is granted you; for without them there could be no ground to raise a faction. But I would ask you one civil question, What right has any man among you, or any association of men, (to come nearer to you) who out of parliament cannot be considered in a public capacity, to meet, as you daily do, in factious clubs, to vilify the government in your discourses, and to libel it in all your writings? Who made you judges in Israel? or how is it consistent with your zeal for the public welfare to promote sedition? Does your definition of loyal, which is to serve the King according to the laws, allow you the license of traducing the executive power with which you own he is invested? You complain that his Majesty has lost the love and confidence of his people; and, by your very urging it, you endeavour what in you lies to make him lose them. All good subjects abhor the thought of arbitrary power, whether it be in one or many: if you were the patriots you would seem, you would not, at this rate, incense the multitude to assume it; for no sober man can fear it, either from the King's disposition or his practice, or even, where you would odiously lay it, from his ministers. Give us leave to enjoy the government, and benefit of laws under which we were born, and which we desire to transmit to our posterity. You are not the trustees of the public liberty; and, if you have not right to petition in a crowd, much less have you to intermeddle in the management of affairs, or to arraign what you do not like; which, in effect, is every thing that is

done by the King and council. Can you imagine that any reasonable man will believe you respect the person of his Majesty, when it is apparent that your seditious pamphlets are stuffed with particular reflections on him? If you have the confidence to deny this, it is easy to be evinced from a thousand passages, which I only forbear to quote, because I desire they should die and be forgotten. I have perused many of your papers; and to show you that I have, the third part of your No-protestant Plot is much of it stolen from your dead author's pamphlet, called *The Growth of Popery*⁵; as manifestly as Milton's *Defence of the English People* is from Buchanan, *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*: or your first Covenant, and New Association, from the Holy League of the French Guisards. Any one who reads Davila may trace your practices all along. There were the same pretences for reformation and loyalty, the same aspersions of the King, and the same grounds of a rebellion. I know not whether you will take the historian's word, who says it was reported that Poltrot, a hugonot, murdered Francis Duke of Guise, by the instigations of Theodore Beza; or that it was a hugonot minister, otherwise called a presbyterian, (for our church abhors so devilish a tenet) who first writ a treatise of the lawfulness of deposing and murdering kings of a different persuasion in religion. But I am able to prove, from the doctrine of Calvin, and principles of Buchanan, that they set the people above the magistrate: which, if I mistake

⁵ Written by Andrew Marvel, and published in 1678.

not, is your own fundamental; and which carries your loyalty no farther than your liking. When a vote of the House of Commons goes on your side, you are as ready to observe it as if it were passed into a law; but when you are pinched with any former and yet unrepealed act of parliament, you declare that, in some cases, you will not be obliged by it. The passage is in the same third part of the No-protestant Plot, and is too plain to be denied. The late copy of your intended Association you neither wholly justify nor condemn; but as the Papists, when they are unopposed, fly out into all the pageantries of worship, but, in times of war, when they are hardpressed by arguments, lie close intrenched behind the council of Trent; so now, when your affairs are in a low condition, you dare not pretend that to be a legal combination; but whensoever you are afloat, I doubt not but it will be maintained and justified to purpose: for indeed there is nothing to defend it but the sword. 'Tis the proper time to say any thing, when men have all things in their power.

In the mean time you would fain be nibbling at a parallel betwixt this Association and that in the time of Queen Elizabeth⁶: but there is this small difference betwixt them, that the ends of the one are directly opposite to the other; one with the Queen's approbation and conjunction, as head of it, the other without either the consent or knowledge of the King, against whose authority it is manifestly designed. Therefore you do well

⁶ In 1584. See Camden's History of Elizabeth,

to have recourse to your last evasion, that it was contrived by your enemies, and shuffled into the papers that were seized; which yet you see the nation is not so easy to believe as your own jury. But the matter is not difficult, to find twelve men in Newgate who would acquit a malefactor.

I have one only favour to desire of you at parting, that when you think of answering this Poem, you would employ the same pens against it who have combated, with so much success, against Absalom and Achitophel; for then you may assure yourselves of a clear victory, without the least reply. Rail at me abundantly; and, not to break a custom, do it without wit: by this method you will gain a considerable point, which is, wholly to wave the answer of my arguments. Never own the bottom of your principles, for fear they should be treason. Fall severely on the miscarriages of government; for if scandal be not allowed, you are no free-born subjects. If God has not blessed you with the talent of rhyming, make use of my poor stock, and welcome; let your verses run upon my feet; and, for the utmost refuge of notorious blockheads, reduced to the last extremity of sense, turn my own lines upon me, and, in utter despair of your own satire, make me satirize myself. Some of you have been driven to this bay already: but, above all the rest, commend me to the non-conformist parson who writ the Whip and Key. I am afraid it is not read so much as the piece deserves, because the bookseller is every week crying *help*, at the end of his Gazette, to get it off. You see I am charitable enough to do him a kindness, that

it may be published as well as printed ; and that so much skill in Hebrew derivations may not lie for waste paper in the shop. Yet I half suspect he went no farther for his learning than the index of Hebrew names and etymologies which is printed at the end of some English bibles. If Achitophel signify the Brother of a Fool, the author of that poem will pass with his readers for the next of kin : and, perhaps, it is the relation that makes the kindness. Whatever the verses are, buy them up, I beseech you out of pity ; for I hear the Conventicle is shut up, and the brother of Achitophel out of service.

Now footmen, you know, have the generosity to make a purse for a member of their society who has had his livery pulled over his ears ; and even Protestant socks are bought up among you, out of veneration to the name. A dissenter in poetry from sense and English, will make as good a Protestant rhymers as a dissenter from the church of England a Protestant parson : besides, if you encourage a young beginner, who knows but he may elevate his style a little above the vulgar epithets of Profane and Saucy Jack, and Atheistic scribbler, with which he treats me, when the fit of enthusiasm is strong upon him ? by which well-mannered and charitable expressions I was certain of his sect before I knew his name. What would you have more of a man ? He has damned me in your cause from Genesis to the Revelations ; and has half the texts of both the Testaments against me, if you will be so civil to yourselves as to take him for your interpreter, and not to take them for Irish witnesses.

After all, perhaps, you will tell me that you retained him only for the opening of your cause, and that your main lawyer is yet behind : now, if it so happen he meet with no more reply than his predecessors, you may either conclude that I trust to the goodness of my cause, or fear my adversary, or disdain him, or what you please ; for the short on't is, it is indifferent to your humble servant whatever your party says or thinks of him.

THE MEDAL.

A SATIRE AGAINST SEDITION.

Per Graium populos, mediæque per Elidis urbem,
Ibat ovans, Divumque sibi poscebat honorem.
VIRG.

OF all our antic sights and pageantry,
Which English idiots run in crowds to see,
The Polish Medal¹ bears the prize alone,
A monster, more the favourite of the Town
Than either fairs or theatres have shown.
Never did Art so well with Nature strive,
Nor ever idol seem'd so much alive;
So like the man, so golden to the sight,
So base within, so counterfeit and light:
One side is fill'd with title and with face,
And, lest the King should want a regal place,
On the reverse a tower the town surveys,
O'er which our mounting sun his beams displays.
The word, pronounced aloud by shrieval voice,
Lætatur, which, in Polish, is *Rejoice*.

¹ Mr. Malone describes this medal as bearing on one side the head of Shaftesbury; on the reverse, a view of the city of London with a rising sun; and in the exergue the word *Lætatur*, with the date 24th Nov. 1681.

The day, month, year, to the great act are join'd,
And a new canting holiday design'd.
Five days he sat, for every cast and look,
Four more than God to finish Adam took :
But who can tell what essence angels are,
Or how long Heaven was making Lucifer ?
O, could the style that copied every grace,
And plough'd such furrows for an eunuch-face,
Could it have form'd his ever-changing will,
The various piece had tired the graver's skill !
A martial hero first, with early care,
Blown, like a pigmy by the winds, to war ;
A beardless chief, a rebel ere a man,
So young his hatred to his prince began.
Next this, how wildly will ambition steer !
A vermin, wriggling in the' usurper's ear ;
Bartering his venal wit for sums of gold,
He cast himself into the saint-like mould ;
Groan'd, sigh'd, and pray'd, while godliness was
gain,
The loudest bagpipe of the squeaking train.
But, as 'tis hard to cheat a juggler's eyes,
His open lewdness he could ne'er disguise :
There split the saint ; for hypocritic zeal
Allows no sins but those it can conceal.
Whoring to scandal gives too large a scope :
Saints must not trade, but they may interlope.
The' ungodly principle was all the same,
But a gross cheat betrays his partner's game.
Besides, their pace was formal, grave, and slack ;
His nimble wit outran the heavy pack
Yet still he found his fortune at a stay,
Whole droves of blockheads choking up his way :

They took, but not rewarded, his advice ;
Villain and wit exact a double price.
Power was his aim ; but thrown from that pretence,
The wretch turn'd loyal in his own defence,
And malice reconciled him to his prince.
Him, in the anguish of his soul, he served,
Rewarded faster still than he deserved.
Behold him now exalted into trust,
His counsels oft convenient, seldom just :
E'en in the most sincere advice he gave,
He had a grudging still to be a knave.
The frauds he learn'd in his fanatic years,
Made him uneasy in his lawful gears :
At best, as little honest as he could,
And, like white witches, mischievously good.
To his first bias, longingly, he leans,
And rather would be great by wicked means.
Thus, framed for ill, he loosed our triple hold,
Advice unsafe, precipitous, and bold :
From hence those tears, that Ilium of our woe,
Who helps a powerful friend, fore-arms a foe.
What wonder if the waves prevail so far,
When he cut down the banks that made the bar ?
Seas follow but their nature, to invade ;
But he by art our native strength betray'd.
So Samson to his foe his force confess'd,
And, to be shorn, lay slumbering on her breast ;
But when this fatal counsel, found too late,
Exposed its author to the public hate ;
When his just sovereign by no impious way
Could be seduced to arbitrary sway,
Forsaken of that hope, he shifts his sail,
Drives down the current with a popular gale,
And shows the fiend confess'd, without a veil.

He preaches to the crowd that power is lent,
But not convey'd, to kingly government;
That claims successive bear no binding force;
That coronation-oaths are things of course :
Maintains the multitude can never err,
And sets the people in the Papal chair.
The reason's obvious, Interest never lies ;
The most have still their interest in their eyes ;
The power is always theirs, and power is ever wise.
Almighty Crowd ! thou shorten'st all dispute,
Power is thy essence, wit thy attribute ;
Nor faith nor reason make thee at a stay,
Thou leap'st o'er all eternal truths in thy Pindaric
way !

Athens, no doubt, did righteously decide,
When Phocion and when Socrates were tried ;
As righteously they did those dooms repent ;
Still they were wise whatever way they went ;
Crowds err not, though to both extremes they run,
To kill the father, and recall the son.
Some think the fools were most, as times went then,
But now the world's o'erstock'd with prudent men.
The common cry is e'en Religion's test ;
The Turk's at Constantinople best ;
Idols in India, Popery at Rome ;
And our own worship only true at home :
And true, but for the time ; 'tis hard to know
How long we please it shall continue so.
This side to-day, and that to-morrow burns ;
So all are god-almighties in their turns.
A tempting doctrine, plausible and new ;
What fools our fathers were, if this be true !
Who, to destroy the seeds of civil war,
Inherent right in monarchs did declare ;

And, that a lawful power might never cease,
Secured succession to secure our peace.
Thus property and sovereign sway, at last,
In equal balances were justly cast ;
But this new Jehu spurs the hot-mouth'd horse,
Instructs the beast to know his native force,
To take the bit between his teeth, and fly
To the next headlong steep of anarchy.
Too happy England, if our good we knew,
Would we possess the freedom we pursue !
The lavish government can give no more,
Yet we repine, and plenty makes us poor.
God tried us once ; our rebel-fathers fought ;
He glutted them with all the power they sought ;
Till, master'd by their own usurping brave,
The free-born subject sunk into a slave.
We loathe our manna, and we long for quails :
Ah, what is man when his own wish prevails !
How rash, how swift to plunge himself in ill !
Proud of his power, and boundless in his will !
That kings can do no wrong we must believe :
None can they do, and must they all receive ?
Help, Heaven ! or sadly we shall see an hour
When neither wrong nor right are in their power !
Already they have lost their best defence,
The benefit of laws which they dispense ;
No justice to their righteous cause allow'd,
But baffled by an arbitrary crowd ;
And Medals graved, their conquest to record,
The stamp and coin of their adopted lord.

The man who laugh'd but once, to see an ass
Mumbling to make the cross-grain'd thistles pass,
Might laugh again, to see a jury chaw
The prickles of unpalatable law.

The witnesses that, leech-like, lived on blood,
Sucking for them were medicinally good ;
But when they fasten'd on their fester'd sore,
Then justice and religion they forswore ;
Their maiden oaths debauch'd into a whore.
Thus men are raised by factions, and decried,
And rogue and saint distinguish'd by their side.
They rack e'en Scripture to confess their cause,
And plead a call to preach, in spite of laws.
But that's no news to the poor injured page ;
It has been used as ill in every age :
And is constrain'd, with patience, all to take :
For what defence can Greek and Hebrew make ?
Happy who can this talking trumpet seize ;
They make it speak whatever sense they please.
'Twas framed, at first, our oracle to' inquire ;
But since our sects in prophecy grow higher,
The text inspires not them, but they the text inspire.

London ! thou great emporium of our isle,
O thou too bounteous, thou too fruitful Nile !
How shall I praise or curse to thy desert,
Or separate thy sound from thy corrupted part ?
I call'd thee Nile ; the parallel will stand ;
Thy tides of wealth o'erflow the fatten'd land ;
Yet monsters from thy large increase we find,
Engender'd on the slime thou leavest behind.
Sedition has not wholly seized on thee ;
Thy nobler parts are from infection free :
Of Israel's tribes thou hast a numerous band,
But still the Canaanite is in the land.
Thy military chiefs are brave and true ;
Nor are thy disenchanted burghers few.
The head is loyal which thy heart commands,
But what's a head with two such gouty hands ?

The wise and wealthy love the surest way,
And are content to thrive and to obey :
But wisdom is to sloth too great a slave ;
None are so busy as the fool and knave.
Those let me curse ; what vengeance will they urge,
Whose ordures neither plague nor fire can purge ?
Nor sharp experience can to duty bring,
Nor angry Heaven, nor a forgiving King !
In gospel-phrase their chapmen they betray ;
Their shops are dens, the buyer is their prey :
The knack of trades is living on the spoil ;
They boast, e'en when each other they beguile.
Customs to steal is such a trivial thing,
That 'tis their charter to defraud their king.
All hands unite of every jarring sect ;
They cheat the country first, and then infect.
They for God's cause their monarchs dare dethrone,
And they'll be sure to make his cause their own.
Whether the plotting Jesuit laid the plan
Of murdering kings, or the French Puritan,
Our sacrilegious sects their guides outgo,
And kings and kingly power would murder too.

What means their traitorous combination less,
Too plain to' evade, too shameful to confess ?
But treason is not own'd when 'tis descried ;
Successful crimes alone are justified.
The men who no conspiracy would find,
Who doubts but, had it taken, they had join'd ;
Join'd in a mutual covenant of defence,
At first without, at last against their prince ?
If sovereign right by sovereign power they scan,
The same bold maxim holds in God and man :
God were not safe, his thunder could they shun ;
He should be forced to crown another son.

Thus when the heir was from the vineyard thrown,
The rich possession was the murderer's own.
In vain to sophistry they have recourse ;
By proving theirs no plot, they prove 'tis worse,
Unmask'd rebellion, and audacious force ;
Which though not actual, yet all eyes may see
'Tis working, in the' immediate power to be ;
For, from pretended grievances they rise,
First to dislike, and after to despise ;
Then, Cyclop like, in human flesh to deal,
Chop up a minister at every meal ;
Perhaps not wholly to melt down the King,
But clip his regal rights within the ring :
From thence to' assume the power of peace and war,
And ease him, by degrees, of public care.
Yet, to consult his dignity and fame,
He should have leave to exercise the name,
And hold the cards, while Commons play'd the
game.

For what can power give more than food and drink,
To live at ease, and not be bound to think ?
These are the cooler methods of their crime,
But their hot zealots think 'tis loss of time ;
On utmost bounds of loyalty they stand,
And grin and whet like a Croatian band,
That waits impatient for the last command.
Thus outlaws open villany maintain ;
They steal not, but in squadrons scour the plain ;
And if their power the passengers subdue,
The most have right, the wrong is in the few.
Such impious axioms foolishly they show,
For in some soils republics will not grow :
Our temperate isle will no extremes sustain
Of popular sway or arbitrary reign ;

But slides between them both into the best,
Secure in freedom, in a monarch bless'd :
And though the climate, vex'd with various winds,
Works, through our yielding bodies, on our minds,
The wholesome tempest purges what it breeds,
To recommend the calmness that succeeds.

But thou, the pander of the people's hearts,
O crooked soul, and serpentine in arts !
Whose blandishments a loyal land have whored,
And broke the bonds she plighted to her lord ;
What curses on thy blasted name will fall !
Which age to age their legacy shall call ;
For all must curse the woes that must descend
on all.

Religion thou hast none ; thy Mercury [thee ;
Has pass'd through every sect, or theirs through
But what thou givest, that venom still remains,
And the pox'd nation feels thee in their brains.
What else inspires the tongues, and swells the
breasts

Of all thy bellowing renegado priests,
That preach up thee for God ; dispense thy laws ;
And with the stum ferment their fainting cause ;
Fresh fumes of madness raise, and toil and sweat
To make the formidable cripple great ?
Yet should thy crimes succeed, should lawless
power

Compass those ends thy greedy hopes devour,
Thy canting friends thy mortal foes would be ;
Thy god and theirs will never long agree.
For thine (if thou hast any) must be one
That lets the world and human-kind alone ;
A jolly god, that passes hours too well
To promise heaven, or threaten us with hell :

That unconcern'd can at rebellion sit,
 And wink at crimes he did himself commit.
 A tyrant theirs ; the heaven their priesthood paints
 A conventicle of gloomy sullen saints ;
 A heaven, like bedlam, slovenly and sad,
 Foredoom'd for souls with false religion mad.

Without a vision poets can foreshow
 What all but fools, by common sense, may know :
 If true succession from our isle should fail,
 And crowds profane with impious arms prevail ;
 Not thou, nor those thy factious arts engage,
 Shall reap that harvest of rebellious rage,
 With which thou flatter'st thy decrepit age.
 The swelling poison of the several sects,
 Which, wanting vent, the nation's health infects,
 Shall burst its bag : and, fighting out their way,
 The various venoms on each other prey.
 The Presbyter, puff'd up with spiritual pride,
 Shall on the necks of the lewd nobles ride,
 His brethren damn, the civil power defy,
 And parcel out republic prelacy :
 But short shall be his reign ; his rigid yoke
 And tyrant power will puny sects provoke ;
 And frogs and toads, and all the tadpole train,
 Will croak to Heaven for help from this devour-
 ing crane. [jar,
 The cut-throat Sword and clamorous Gown shall
 In sharing their ill-gotten spoils of war :
 Chiefs shall be grudged the part which they
 pretend ;
 Lords envy lords, and friends with every friend
 About their impious merit shall contend.
 The surly Commons shall respect deny,
 And justle Peerage out with property.

Their General either shall his trust betray,
And force the crowd to arbitrary sway ;
Or they suspecting his ambitious aim,
In hate of kings, shall cast anew the frame,
And thrust out Collatine that bore their name.

Thus inborn broils the factions would engage,
Or wars of exiled heirs, or foreign rage,
Till halting Vengeance overtook our age :
And our wild labours, wearied into rest,
Reclined us on a rightful monarch's breast.

— Pudet hæc opprobria, vobis
Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli.

END OF VOL. XVIII.





